

# Living on the Aylesbury Estate

2015 benchmark report for future  
monitoring of the regeneration programme

**November 2017**



# 1. Introduction

In 2014, Social Life was commissioned by Notting Hill Housing to devise a monitoring framework to assess the social impact of the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate over the next 18 years. This included developing a set of Partnership Performance Indicators to assess the social impact of the fundamental changes to the estate that will take place, and a research and monitoring strategy to gather the information over this period.

The first stage has been to carry out research to explore the experience of residents before Notting Hill Housing's programme of demolition and rebuilding begins. The bulk of this research was carried out between June and November 2014, with two discussion groups and some additional interviews in early 2015.

This research is a snapshot of the estate, and its residents, at a particular time, when initial demolition and rebuilding of Aylesbury's concrete blocks had started, L&Q's new schemes in the southwest corner of the estate had been completed, and construction was under way on the northern L&Q site. Notting Hill Housing's first development site - covering the Bradenham, Chartridge, Arklow and Chiltern blocks - had been almost fully vacated to prepare for demolition.

**This report sets out the findings of this research which were presented to Notting Hill Housing. The results will be used to inform the regeneration programme and will set the benchmark against which future progress will be measured.**

## 2. Key findings

### The Aylesbury Estate

1. Many people living on the Aylesbury Estate are on very low incomes, and unemployment is higher than the Southwark average. However, there are a number of strong protective factors that support residents and help them cope with difficulties. These include good public services, particularly health and education; good transport links to access work and wider support networks; the proximity of Burgess Park; social solidarity and tolerance between different groups; and neighbourly and often friendly relationships between people living in close proximity.
2. The population is extremely diverse, and the number of different ethnicities and nationalities has increased over the last 15 years. The estate has always been home to a significant transient population, which changes over time, reflecting trends in migration to London. A significant number of residents live on the estate for a short time, sometimes in unstable unofficial housing.

### Social sustainability

3. The social sustainability assessment, carried out using Social Life's framework, reveals that the estate scores lower than would be expected for "voice and influence"; at expected levels for "adaptability and resilience" and "amenities and social infrastructure"; and higher than expected for "social and cultural life".
4. Residents of the new L&Q homes and the red brick blocks tend to report stronger neighbourliness and belonging, and higher satisfaction with facilities than people living in the concrete blocks.
5. Council tenants have lower levels of satisfaction and wellbeing, compared to homeowners and housing association tenants, but still score above what would be expected for people living in comparable areas on most of these questions.
6. Private tenants have the lowest levels of belonging and lowest expectation of staying resident on the estate.



Figure 1: The Aylesbury Estate

7. Most residents like living on the Aylesbury Estate. Overall, they feel comfortable living there, they feel they belong. They appreciate the good local facilities and services; the local parks and playgrounds; access to shops; and good transport connections.
8. Most residents feel there are significant problems with the physical condition of the housing.
9. There are few community facilities that enable people to meet and socialise. Public spaces are often poorly used and designed, and sometimes intimidating. The majority of residents live in flats with no gardens, play areas are fairly well used by children, but there are few outdoor social spaces for others.
10. The area is not as unsafe as its reputation suggests. Fear of crime is what you would expect in similar areas. There are problems at times, it is less safe at night, and less safe for more marginalised residents living less stable lives.
11. Generally people feel at home with their neighbours and know people in their corridors, and to a lesser extent in their blocks. Residents tend to stick to the parts of the estate they live in, or use regularly. Many longer-standing residents voice regret about the loss of community ties, but most newer residents report that it is a welcoming place, and accepting of people from a wide range of backgrounds.
12. Residents feel they have little control over agencies and institutions, and feel their influence on the future of the estate is low. This does not necessarily mean they feel out of control of their lives in general - many residents are resilient, getting by successfully in difficult circumstances.

### **Attitudes towards regeneration**

13. Residents are broadly supportive of the regeneration, the majority of those expressing an opinion were in favour of the plans. There are however some fears about whether the replacement homes will be “for us”, and many people are unclear about what is being proposed.
14. Particular groups are exposed to the stress and dislocation that change will bring, including young people who worry about loss of friendships and social networks, and those who are vulnerable because of poverty, age, illness or disability, or because they do not have strong supportive social networks.



*Figure 2: The Aylesbury Estate*

### 3. Approach

The aim of the research was to find out about the day-to-day experience of Aylesbury residents and how they feel about their lives on the estate, to investigate how residents felt about the neighbourhood and their neighbours, and about their situation at a time of change. This was a challenging task, given the number of residents on the estate and the complex diversity of the resident community.

The estate is home to an extensive range of groups, including long-standing residents, from English and Irish families well established in the neighbourhood, to newly arrived refugees from Nigeria, Sudan and Iran. Since the 1980s, the Aylesbury's poor reputation and high turnover has meant that people arriving in Southwark in housing need have been disproportionately likely to find housing on the estate. People living on the estate come from an even greater range of nationalities, ethnicities and backgrounds than the hyper-diverse area of south London in which it lies. Transience is also a feature of the estate, some residents stay for short times, either officially or unofficially renting or sub-letting from leaseholders or from council tenants.

The research strategy devised to structure this project was mixed in approach, as no one single research method would reveal enough to build an understanding of the lives of Aylesbury's residents. One-to-one in-depth interviews with residents are revealing about their individual experience but do not capture a sufficiently large population; a more structured quantitative research approach can give a larger spread of responses but provides less in-depth understanding of answers to fixed questions. Focus groups offer residents a way to give more nuanced and thoughtful opinions alongside their peers, but only involve small numbers and are less likely to include the views of people who are less vocal or confident, or those who feel they do not have a stake in the area's future. Interviews with agencies and individuals who know the resident community well through their work can provide an insightful professional perspective but may only reflect a narrow experience of the resident population. Similarly, community groups have valuable perceptions and opinions to offer, but their insight will be greatest into their own constituency.

To overcome these limitations, a multi-method approach was used, combining all of these approaches:

- a survey of 358 residents was commissioned by an independent research company to capture residents' perceptions. The survey included a representative sample of the estate by tenure, and from the different blocks
- 82 semi-structured street interviews with residents took place to explore in more depth what is shaping and influencing residents' views. These followed set routes, at different times of the day. Members of the Creation Trust's Community Team carried out some of these interviews, alongside Social Life staff



*Figure 3: Building the estate in the 1960s*

- seven focus groups and discussions with key groups of residents and stakeholders were convened to corroborate the emerging research findings
- a researcher was embedded in the 2InSpire Friday youth session for three weeks, building up relationships with young people and discussing their views of the regeneration
- 25 agencies and local stakeholders were interviewed, including the police, housing management staff, employment projects, schools, other services for children and young people, and local faith and community organisations
- review and analysis of a range of written material, including consultation material gathered by Notting Hill Housing and its consultants, prior research and analysis about the estate, and existing data from the census, plus Social Life’s social sustainability data.

In total, over 580 residents were interviewed for this research.

The research also gathered information against the seven Partnership Performance Indicators agreed between Notting Hill Housing and Southwark Council:

- residents’ satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live
- residents feeling part of the local community
- residents sustaining meaningful employment
- young people making progress to achieve positive outcomes in education, training and employment
- residents feeling that their health and wellbeing has improved
- residents feeling safe
- residents feeling that they have influence over the future of their area.

Underneath each of these sits a number of headline indicators, as it is not possible to understand these complex issues through one single question. Headline indicators report data through a number of different perspectives:

- in comparison with similar socio-geographic areas
- by tenure of respondents
- by development phase.

For a detailed breakdown of the initial 2014 assessment of Partnership Performance Indicators, please see “Measuring the impact of the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate: indicator report” available on [www.aylesburynow.london](http://www.aylesburynow.london).



Figure 4: Part of a mural on the estate



Blue line indicates the boundary of the Aylesbury Estate

**Mapped:**

- 358 residents surveyed
- 46 street interviews with Aylesbury residents
- 15 street interviews with people living on the edge of the estate
- 11 agencies interviewed

**Not mapped:**

- 12 street interviews with Aylesbury residents, block unknown
- 9 street interviews with people living on the edge of the estate, outside of map boundary
- 17 agencies interviewed, outside of map boundary
- 83 people interviewed in focus groups

**Figure 5: Research activities mapped**

## 4. Social sustainability

Social Life defines social sustainability as “a process for creating sustainable, successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places they live and work in. Social sustainability combines design of the physical realm with design of the social world - infrastructure to support social and cultural life, social amenities, systems for citizen engagement and space for people and places to evolve”<sup>1</sup>.

The data gathered has been analysed using Social Life’s social sustainability framework. This approach has been used by Social Life on a number of different projects, across sectors: for Sutton Council; for The Berkeley Group; and to benchmark a substantial regeneration scheme in Acton for Ealing Council, L&Q and Countryside Properties.

Social Life’s social sustainability framework was developed following a thorough review of evidence, from the UK and internationally, about what makes communities thrive. This was commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency in 2010. It sets out a framework for thinking about the social dimensions of community life and how these ideas can be translated into practical initiatives<sup>2</sup>. The original framework was developed for new housing developments. Subsequently the framework has been evolved to capture wellbeing and community strength in existing areas, putting greater emphasis on the adaptability and resilience of local communities<sup>3</sup>.

After a decade of work on sustainable communities by policymakers and professionals much is known about the importance of the quality of the built environment and community facilities, and how these contribute to residents’ satisfaction and wellbeing. There is less understanding however, about the practical steps that can be taken to make these aspirations tangible, about what can be done in practice. Internationally there is growing interest in “social sustainability” as a way to frame these concepts and to rebalance the sustainable development agenda to take account of social as well as



Figure 6: Aylesbury community garden mural

environmental and economic needs. A small number of organisations are currently putting the concept of social sustainability into practice in urban development.

Applying this framework to the data gathered through this benchmarking research provides a structure for presenting and understanding complex and disparate issues. The social sustainability assessment puts the lived experience of residents and their perceptions of life on the estate at the centre of the measurement of social impact, alongside more familiar issues such as health, poverty, crime and the quality of the built environment.

This approach has allowed a broad assessment of the social sustainability of the Aylesbury Estate to be made at the start of Notting Hill Housing’s programme. This will be revisited over time in subsequent rounds of research and monitoring in future years.

A report on the approach to monitoring social impact is available from [www.aylesburynow.london](http://www.aylesburynow.london).

## The four dimensions of social sustainability



### Voice & Influence

Residents’ ability & willingness to take action to shape the local environment; governance structures to represent residents & engage them in shaping local decisions.



### Amenities & Social Infrastructure

Amenities & support services for individuals & communities: schools, social spaces, transport & community workers.



### Social & Cultural Life

Sense of belonging, wellbeing, community cohesion, safety, relationships with neighbours & local networks.



### Adaptability & Resilience

Flexible planning; housing, services & infrastructure that can adapt over time; adaptable use of buildings & public space.



Figure 7: The social sustainability framework

## 5. The Aylesbury Estate

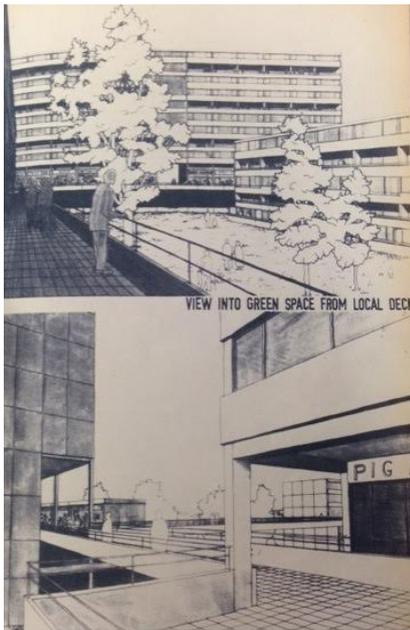


Figure 8: Original drawings for the estate

The Aylesbury Estate was completed in 1977. It was planned as part of wider slum clearance in Walworth, and the homes were built to Parker Morris standards with generous space standards internally. The design reflected the architectural interest at the time in separating people and vehicles by creating “streets in the sky”, a series of walkways for people to move round the estate separating vehicles from people on foot. The estate includes a number of older blocks, the “red brick blocks”, which were built in earlier decades.

The estate was criticised from its early days for its appearance, and for design flaws, including in the heating system. Residents were initially happy with their new light homes, but throughout the 1980s and 1990s the estate became synonymous with inner-city decay, poverty and crime. The estate’s reputation declined and its notoriety increased. In 1997 it was the venue for Tony Blair’s first major speech as Prime Minister, announcing his new administration’s approach to deprived neighbourhoods and to welfare reform. The speech described Aylesbury residents as among “the poorest people in our country [who] have been forgotten by government.”

Very quickly afterwards the Aylesbury was given New Deal for Communities (NDC) status, with a budget of £56.2m over 10 years for social and community-based programmes. Initially a stock transfer was planned but residents voted against the ballot in December 2001. 73 per cent of residents voted to keep the estate with the council, with a 76 per cent turnout.

### The estate today

A socio-economic profile of the estate is the starting point for understanding the people who live on the Aylesbury and their day-to-day lives.

The data that is available draws heavily on the 2011 census, supplemented by more recent government data on benefits and income. This has been analysed by statistical areas that map onto the footprint of the estate<sup>4</sup>. This includes six Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs), covering between 400 and 1,200 households, and 22 Output Areas (OAs), including around 125 households.

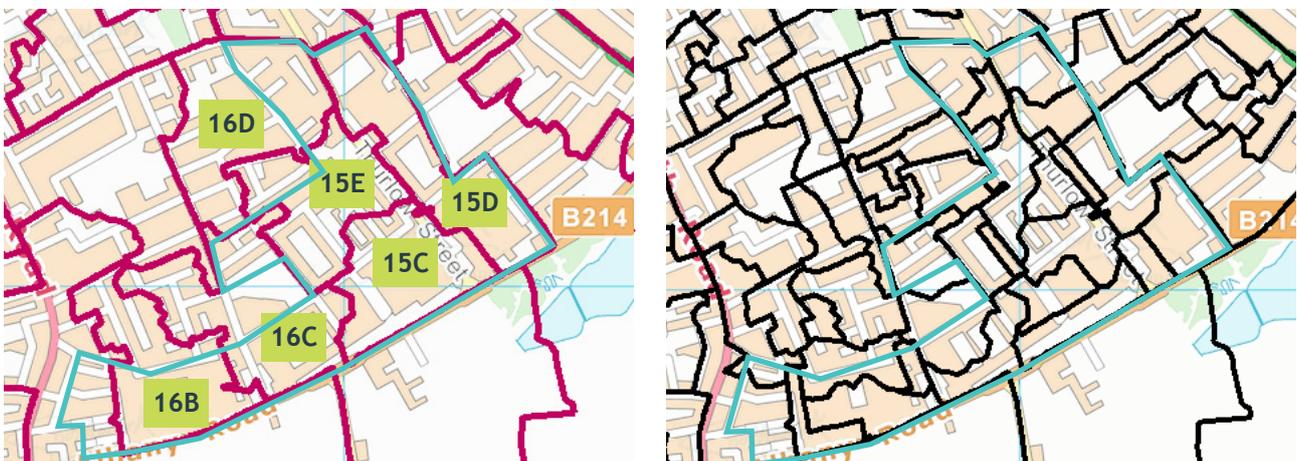


Figure 9: The LSOAs and OAs mapping onto the Aylesbury Estate. Blue line indicates the boundary of the Aylesbury Estate  
Source: Southwark Council Southwark maps

There are limitations with this data: partly because some of the LSOAs and OAs overlap areas outside the estate; because of the age of the data, which is nearly five years old; and as a result of “under enumeration” or under counting in the census (see below). More recent data is available about benefit and incomes, this has been analysed for February 2014, shortly before Notting Hill Housing began work on the estate.

This data should therefore be viewed as a valuable, but somewhat incomplete picture of Aylesbury, complementing the social sustainability assessment of the estate.

## Population

At the start of Notting Hill Housing’s programme in April 2014, 6,700 people were estimated to be living on the Aylesbury Estate. This estimate is based on ONS’ mid-year population estimates for 2013, taking account of the emptying of Chartridge, Chiltern and Bradenham blocks in late 2014.

Between the census of 2001 and 2011, the diversity of the estate’s population increased. The proportion of people living on the estate from white British, black African and black Caribbean backgrounds decreased, and the proportion of people from other ethnicities grew.<sup>5</sup>

Research commissioned from ESRO by Southwark Council<sup>6</sup> looking into the experience of different groups suggests that under counting through the census is likely to be particularly marked amongst Nigerians and people from francophone African countries, Bangladeshis and people from Arab countries. The same research also found that these groups were less likely to register with primary health centres, so are also likely to be omitted from the ONS’ small area population estimates. The population of people born in these countries on the Aylesbury according to the 2011 census is 1,470 people; if these are significantly undercounted then there may be a further 200 to 500 people (or even more) living on the estate who are not recognised in official statistics.

Southwark’s records suggest that in March 2014, 84 per cent of Aylesbury residents were secure council tenants and 16 per cent were leaseholders or freeholders. It is not known how many of the leaseholders are sub-letting, however seven per cent of the residents survey respondents described themselves renting from private landlords.

Agencies and community representatives interviewed reported that the Aylesbury Estate is home to a rapidly changing community. It was noted that this has always been a feature of life on the estate - that its low popularity has meant that it has been at many times the “housing of last resort”, both for those being housed by the council because of homelessness or other urgent housing need, or for those looking for private rented housing through sub-letting from leaseholders, or less formal arrangements. The existence of illegal sub-letting was often mentioned in interviews, and although Southwark housing officers are making more regular tenancy checks, residents and other agencies believe the problem persists, although at a lower level than in the past.

As tenants are rehoused and leaseholders move away before demolition, increasing numbers of flats are being used by Southwark Council as temporary housing. This is introducing a new group of residents to the estate who will not expect to stay in the area in the long term.

Overcrowding on the estate is high. Census data suggests that in 2001 over 47 per cent of residents were living in homes with more than 1.5 people to a room, higher than the Southwark average of 30 per cent. 27 per cent of people interviewed for the residents survey reported that they had five or more people living in their homes, one household was home for 13 people. Agencies also reported instances of severe overcrowding, with rooms being partitioned and several adults sharing one room. The police described visiting a flat that was home for 17 Chinese labourers.

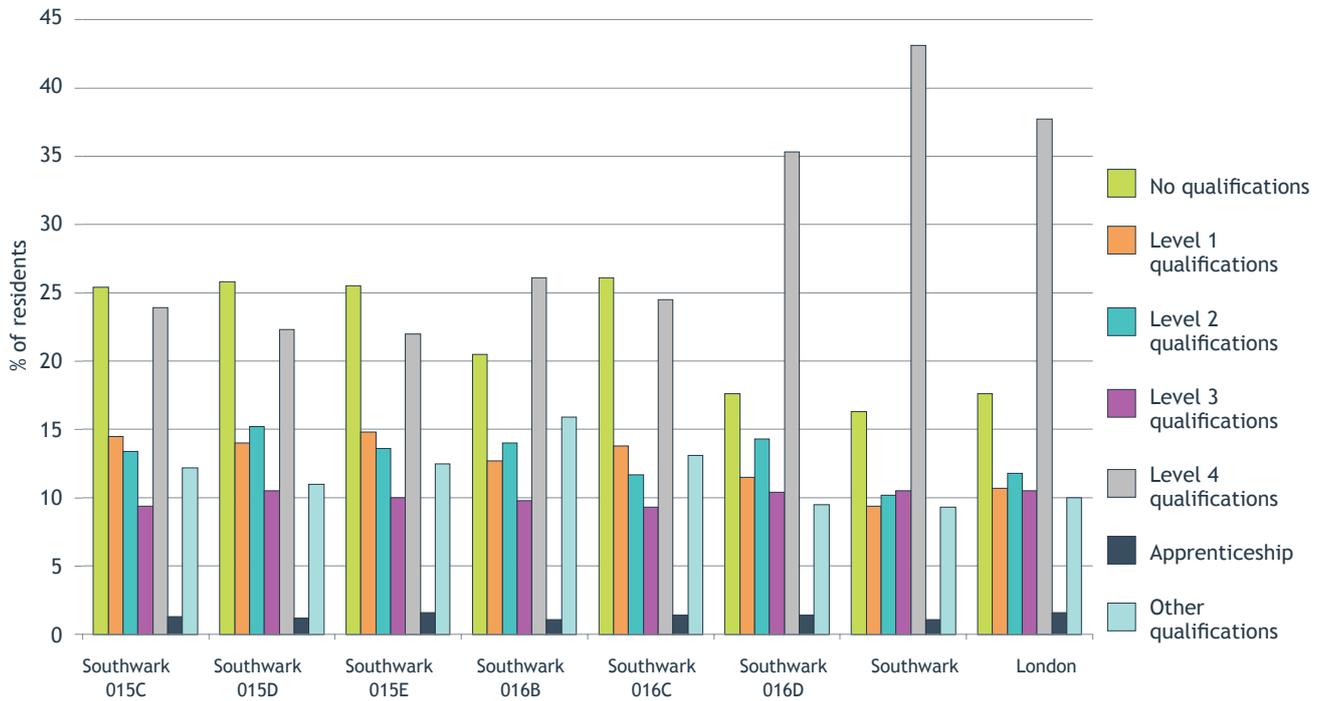
### **Education and qualifications**

Many aspects of life on the estate have improved for residents since the start of the NDC programme. During the life of the NDC, crime and anti-social behaviour fell significantly and educational achievement rose. In 1999, only 17 per cent of young people living on the estate achieved five GCSEs at grade A to C, this rose to 68 per cent in 2008, just below the national average.

This improvement is seen to continue in more recent data for educational attainment (September 2013-August 2014). For the three LSOAs where data is available the number of pupils achieving KS4 5+ A\*-C (including Maths and English), was 56.7 per cent (Southwark 015D), 64.7 per cent (Southwark 015C) and 75 per cent (Southwark 016C). This compares to 61.4 per cent for the borough as a whole, and 61.8 per cent across London.<sup>7</sup>

The census collects information on the qualifications held by individuals. They range from no qualifications through to NVQ Level 4 and above. Overall, Aylesbury Estate residents have lower qualification levels than the borough as a whole, however the data highlights a divide amongst residents, with concentrations of people with no qualifications and people with Level 4+ qualifications.

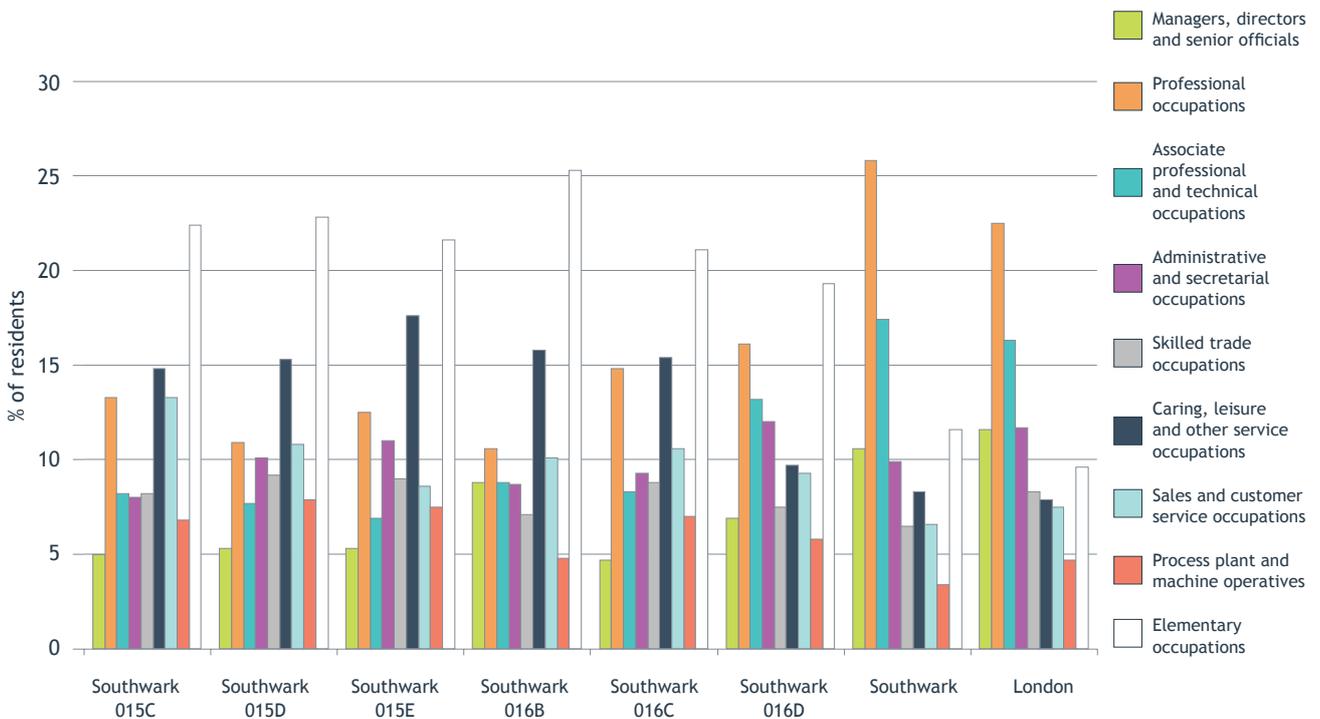
Census data also shows that there was a concentration of residents in low-skilled employment (generally manual work requiring no formal educational qualifications). Low skilled work is associated with precariousness and vulnerability which resonates with the evidence from this research. Agencies described the problem for residents as being one of poor quality work, rather than absolute unemployment, reporting that many residents are working in multiple jobs to make ends meet.



**Figure 10: Qualifications amongst residents**

Source: Census 2011

For map of LSOA, see figure 9, p. 10



**Figure 11: Occupations as proportion of total employment**

Source: Census 2011

For map of LSOA, see figure 9, p. 10

## Economic activity and employment

Economic activity and inactivity is measured at the local area level by the 2011 census, Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) statistics can be used as a more up-to-date proxy for unemployment; JSA does not necessarily reflect the full nature of unemployment because of eligibility requirements.

Economic activity data highlights that at the time of the census, rates of economic activity were generally lower, and unemployment higher, than the Southwark average. Across the estate levels of unemployment were higher than that experienced across the borough. Rates of economic inactivity were also generally higher across the Aylesbury, with more residents looking after home or family. The LSOA area 16D, covering the north end of the estate and some surrounding streets shows a different pattern, here economic activity is slightly higher than the borough average.

Unemployment on the estate varies between different blocks, with the number of working age claimants being higher to the east of the estate. The map on the next page illustrates the working age claimant count for February 2014, just before Notting Hill Housing began work on the estate. Higher numbers are indicated by darker shades of purple.

In the two years between February 2012 and February 2014 long-term unemployment (for over a year) increased.

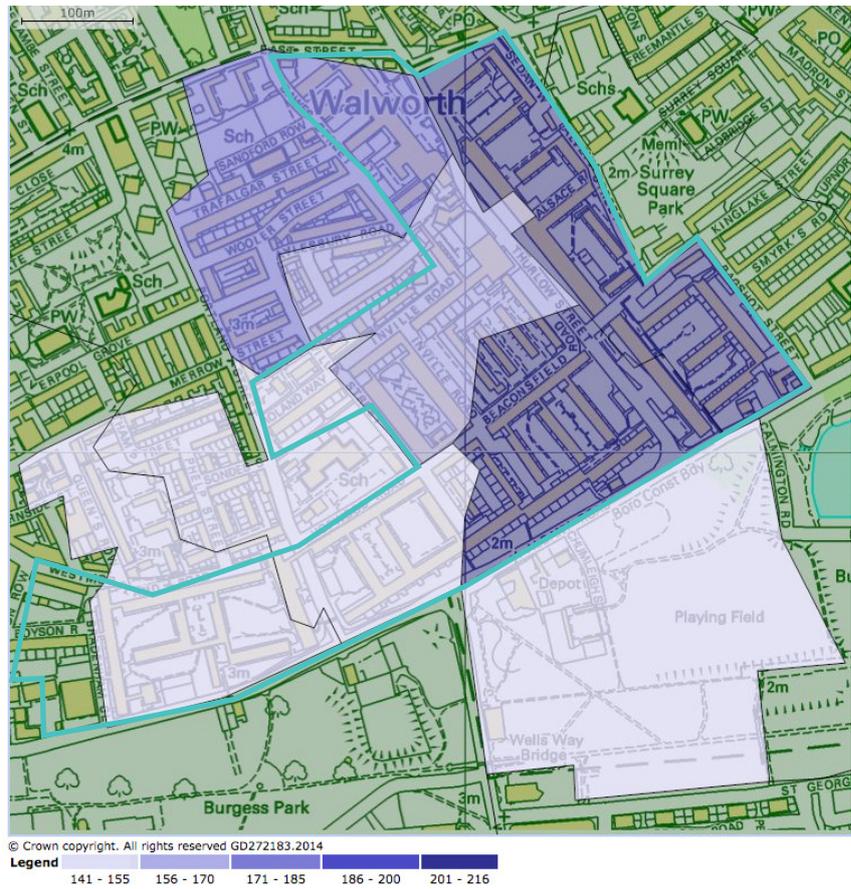
Across the estate the number of young people classified as NEETs (not in employment, education or training) is very low, with data from Southwark from early 2015 reporting three individuals NEET who had only recently become so. The situation of some 41 young residents of the estate was not known at the time.

| Economic activity inactivity: Aylesbury LSOAs, Southwark & London |      |      |      |      |      |      |           |        |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|--------|
|   | 015C | 015D | 015E | 016B | 016C | 016D | Southwark | London |
| <b>Economically active (%)</b>                                    | 67.3 | 65.8 | 63.8 | 71.5 | 65.9 | 73.5 | 73.0      | 71.7   |
| In employment (%)   | 49.8 | 48.7 | 51.5 | 54.4 | 51.8 | 60.4 | 62.0      | 62.4   |
| Unemployed (%)  | 10.1 | 12.2 | 6.9  | 11.5 | 7.9  | 6.6  | 6.0       | 5.2    |
| <b>Economically inactive</b>                                      | 32.7 | 34.2 | 36.2 | 28.5 | 34.1 | 26.5 | 27.0      | 28.3   |

**Figure 12: Economic activity and inactivity**

Source: Census 2011

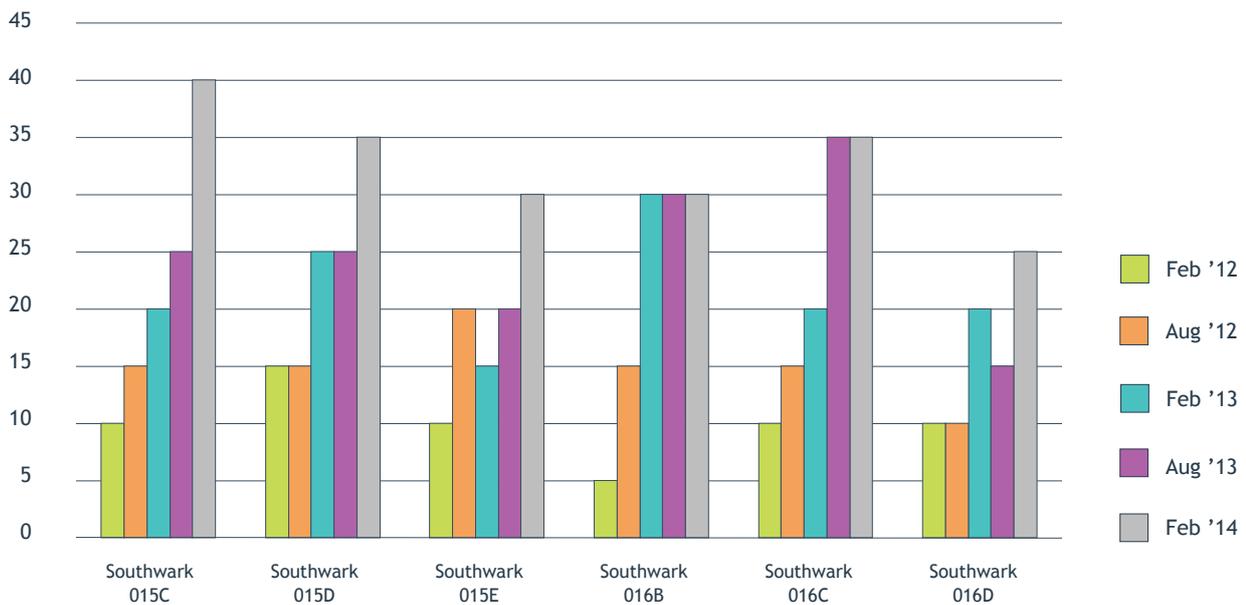
For map of LSOAs, see figure 9, p10



**Figure 13: Numbers of working age benefit claimants, February 2014**

Blue line indicates the boundary of the Aylesbury Estate

Source: Working age claimants for small areas statistics (NOMIS)



**Figure 14: Total claimants, number of long-term unemployed (over one year) (count)**

Source: Benefits claimants for small areas (NOMIS)

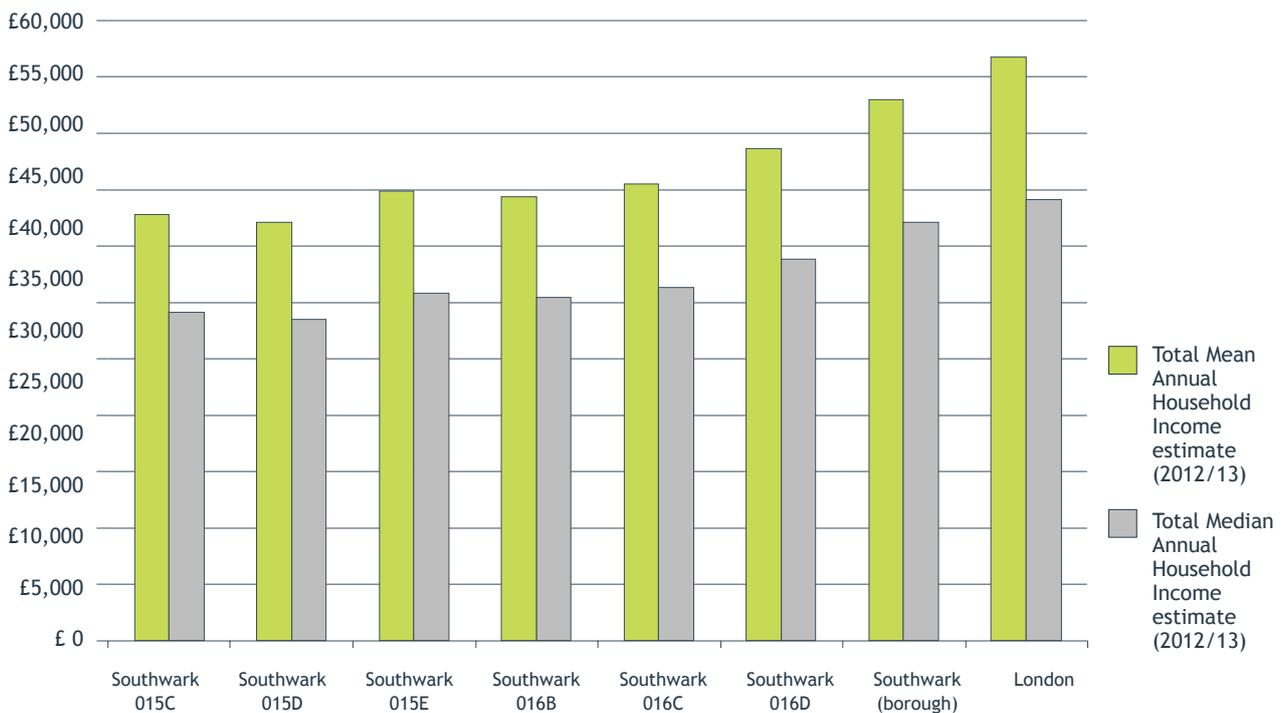
## Income

Residents' incomes are low and many households are living in poverty. 39 per cent of people interviewed in the residents survey had a household income of between £7,001 and £14,000 a year, for 11 per cent annual household income was less than £7,000.

The residents survey asked whether residents earning less than £21,000 a year earned less than the London Living Wage per hour, but only 14 per cent said yes. Response rates for this question were low, 68 people refused to answer the question and 212 said they did not know the answer, possibly because their working patterns are so unpredictable, or possibly because they did not want to share information about their income with a stranger.

GLA data from 2012/13<sup>8</sup> illustrates that annual household income is below the Southwark average across the estate, however none of the six LSOAs are the lowest in the Borough.

A 2013 snapshot on low income families from HMRC<sup>9</sup> shows that there are more children aged under 16 living in low income families (ranging from 29.1 per cent to 44.8 per cent) than the borough average of 27.6 per cent. The comparable figure across London is 21.8 per cent.



**Figure 15: Total mean and median household incomes (2012/13)**

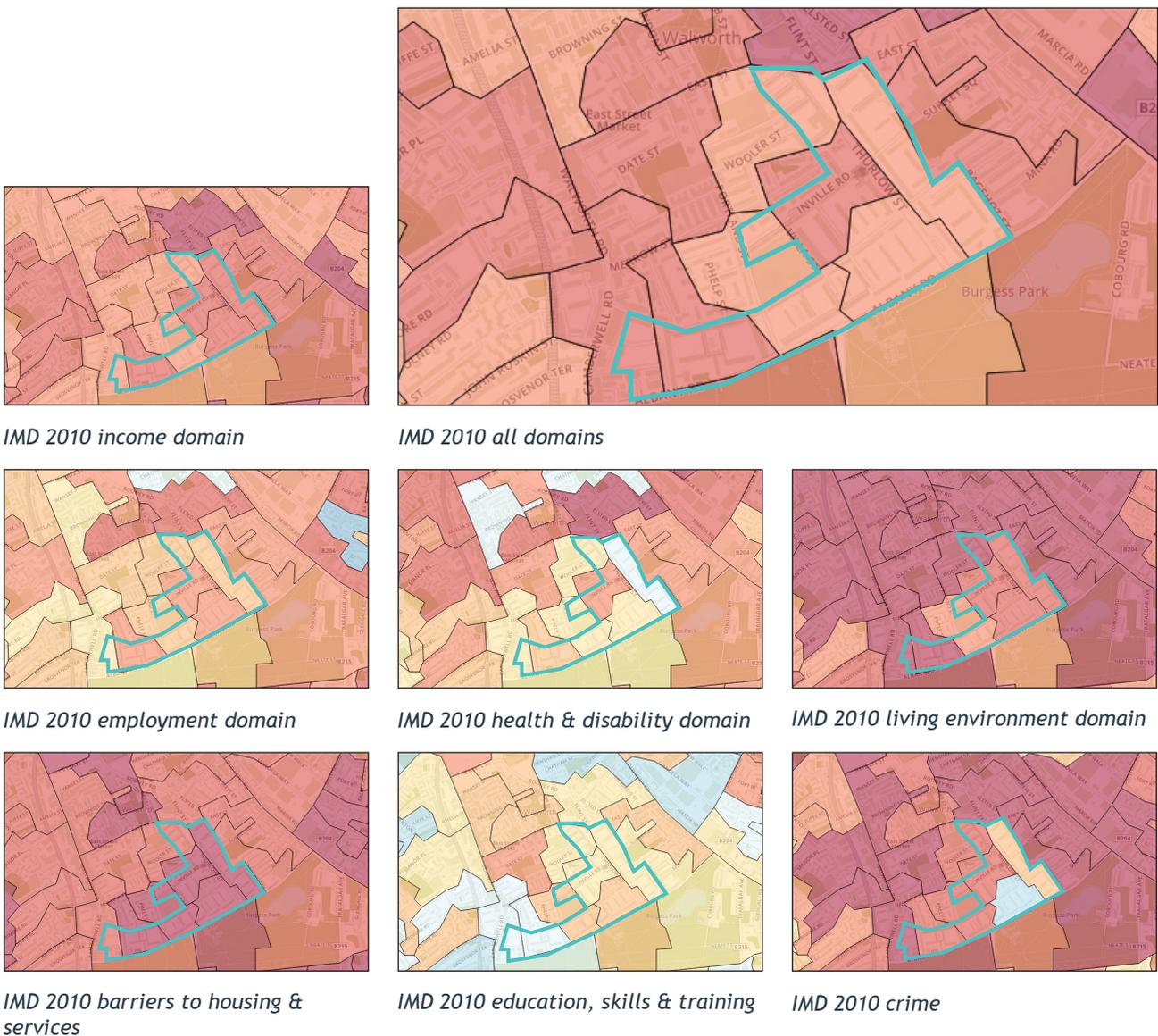
Source: Modelled household income estimates for small areas

<http://data.london.gov.uk/documents/small-area-income-estimates-method-paper.pdf>

## Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010, constructed by ONS, shows that the geographical footprint of the Aylesbury Estate falls within the second and third most deprived deciles of all UK areas - this means that it is not in the worst 10 per cent of local areas but sits just above this in relative rankings. Parts of the Aylesbury Estate are less deprived overall than areas to the east and north. Although census under-enumeration will have affected this, and some poverty and deprivation will therefore be under counted, there is no reason to believe that this will be higher on the Aylesbury Estate than in the surrounding areas.

The IMD is broken down into different topics. The Aylesbury scores poorly on the “living environment” (lowest ranking: 1631/highest 7590) and “barriers to housing and services” (lowest ranking: 1808/highest 3815) measurements. In some IMD domains, such as “health and disability” and “education, skills and training” the estate fares better, scoring around the national average.



**Figure 16: Main image: Map showing IMD 2010 scores of the Aylesbury Estate and surrounding areas: darker red indicates more profound deprivation. Blue line indicates the boundary of the Aylesbury Estate.**

Source: OpenDataCommunities.org 2010 Deprivation mapper

## 6. The overall assessment

The residents survey results have been benchmarked against what would be expected in similar areas. This approach has been developed by Social Life to help understand how areas are faring. It enables a prediction to be made of how residents are likely to feel about their neighbourhoods, their sense of belonging, their fear of crime, their wellbeing, and their relationships with their neighbours and between different groups living in an area. This can then be compared to data about residents' perceptions, to understand how these differ from what would be expected in comparable areas.

These community dynamics indicators are central to understanding social sustainability at the local level. This approach uses data that is openly available, from government and research councils' national surveys including the Understanding Society Survey, the Citizenship Survey, the Crime Survey England & Wales, and Taking Part. These all ask questions about residents' perceptions of the places they live in.

The sample sizes of these surveys are not large enough to disaggregate responses directly to small local areas. However, it is possible to match this data to small areas using two analytic tools that have been developed by ONS: Output Area Classifications (OACs) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). These enable us to see how residents of small areas are likely to feel and to compare

### The overall assessment



#### Voice & Influence

Low sense of influence, control and involvement in actions to shape environment.



#### Amenities & Social Infrastructure

Good schools, health services, transport, green spaces. Poor quality environment, lack of community spaces.



#### Social & Cultural Life

Good neighbourliness, sense of belonging, community cohesion.



#### Adaptability & Resilience

Adaptable population, good social supports. High poverty and vulnerability.

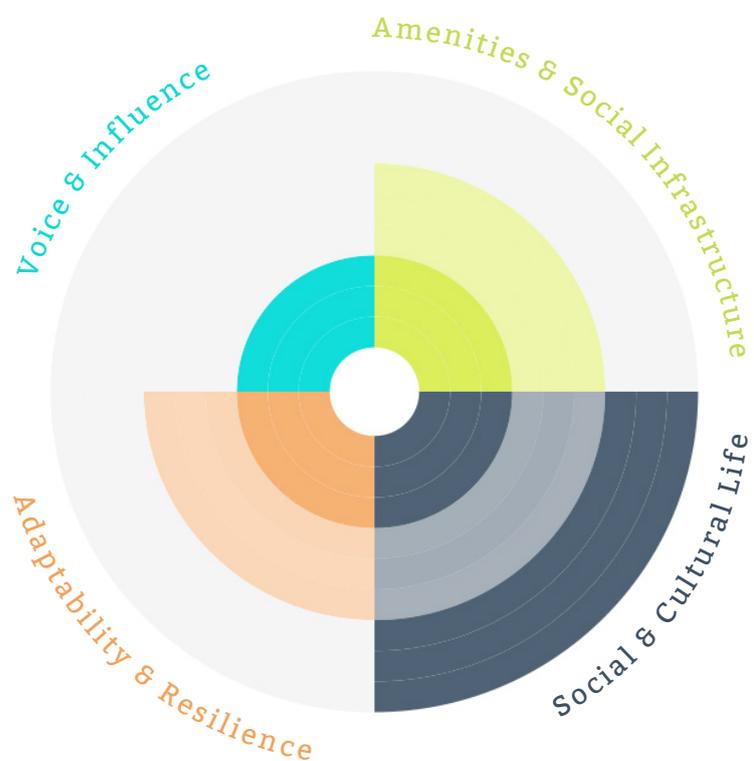


Figure 17: The Aylesbury Estate social sustainability score

data about residents perceptions to “comparable areas”. This is predicative data, not a robust portrait of the neighbourhood.

Comparing the results of the Aylesbury residents survey with comparable areas (using OAC and IMD classifications) and the UK average reveals that residents overall have more positive attitudes to their neighbourhood than would be expected. Their wellbeing is higher than the London and UK averages. However, their sense of influence is lower than would be expected, and they are less likely to take part in voluntary work. Perceptions of crime are more negative than the national average, but similar to comparable areas.

A separate report setting out a full analysis of this seven Partnership Performance Indicators, “Measuring the impact of the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate: indicator report”, is available from [www.aylesburynow.london](http://www.aylesburynow.london).

## Comparisons of key sustainability indicators

|                                 |   | % Aylesbury Estate | % comparable area | % difference: Aylesbury Estate & comparable area | % difference: Aylesbury Estate & UK |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Satisfaction with neighbourhood | Satisfied with local area as a place to live                          | 89.0%              | 75.6%             | 13%  | 3%                                  |
|                                 | Plan to remain a resident for a number of years                       | 90.0%              | 51.2%             | 39%  | 22%                                 |
|                                 | Belong to this neighbourhood  | 89.1%              | 60.8%             | 28%  | 25%                                 |
| Neighbourliness                 | Can go to someone in the neighbourhood for advice                     | 49.2%              | 44.9%             | 4%   | 1%                                  |
|                                 | Borrow things from my neighbours                                      | 23.9%              | 34.5%             | -11%   | -16%                                |
|                                 | Regularly stop and talk with people in the neighbourhood              | 66.4%              | 55.8%             | 11%  | -3%                                 |
|                                 | Willing to work with others to improve my neighbourhood               | 87.6%              | 68.0%             | 20%  | 15%                                 |
|                                 | The friendships and associations in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me | 82.1%              | 52.5%             | 30%  | 25%                                 |
|                                 | People from different backgrounds get on well together                | 94.2%              | 74.1%             | 20%  | 8%                                  |
|                                 | Residents respect ethnic differences between people                   | 94.7%              | 86.4%             | 8%   | 8%                                  |
| Getting by                      | Managing financially: “doing alright” or “living comfortably” *       | 83.2%              | 36.2%             | 47%  | 21%                                 |
| Safety                          | Feel safe walking alone after dark                                    | 64.6%              | 63.7%             | 1%   | -10%                                |
|                                 | Feel safe walking alone during the day                                | 94.9%              | 95.5%             | -1%  | -3%                                 |
|                                 | Perception crime is lower than elsewhere                              | 32.6%              | 32.2%             | 0%   | -22%                                |
| Influence & control             | Can influence decisions affecting local area                          | 33.6%              | 42.7%             | -9%  | -5%                                 |
|                                 | People pull together to improve the neighbourhood                     | 85.4%              | 54.5%             | 31%  | 21%                                 |
|                                 | Have taken action to improve your local area                          | 12.7%              | 3.8%              | 9%   | 7%                                  |
|                                 | Have done voluntary work in the last year                             | 6.2%               | 18.1%             | -12%   | -16%                                |
| Health & wellbeing              | Day-to-day activities are limited because of health or disability     | 9.6%               | 36.9%             | 27%  | 8%                                  |
|                                 | Good or very good health  | 81.7%              | 59.2%             | 28%  | 6%                                  |
|                                 | Good wellbeing (sWEMWBS)  | 26.6%              | 25.1%             | 2%   | 2%                                  |
|                                 | Satisfied with life overall   | 94.6%              | 62.5%             | 32%  | 20%                                 |

\* this response needs further exploration in the future, given the very low incomes of many households  
 All comparable areas are OAC or IMD scores, except for wellbeing which is compared to London.  
 Red indicates lower than expected for comparable areas; green higher than expected for comparable areas.  
 All results have been tested for statistical significance. Those marked grey are not significant results.

Figure 18: Key social sustainability indicators, Aylesbury residents survey results versus comparable areas

## Voice and Influence

“Voice & Influence” explores the extent to which residents feel they have control over the environment in which they live, either through taking part in formal groups or forums, or more informal social activities or activism. It captures how residents are involved in local groups and volunteering, how they take action to improve their area, as well as whether they feel that agencies and institutions respond to residents’ day-to-day issues and problems.

**“We’ve been at the consultation forum and given our views, hopefully they’ll listen.”**

white British leaseholder, age 25-34, Roffo Court

**“The mice and rodents are still there, the damp and the state of the flats is still poor. No one is listening to us.”**

Asian council tenant, age 35-44, Emberton

Residents and agencies reported that people living on the estate often feel powerless and that they have little control over what happens in the area, both now and in the future. There was a strong consensus on this. Some agencies stated that they believed that this was typical of comparable areas, however the survey results suggest that residents’ sense of influence is lower than would be expected in similar places.

Negative views about control often related to poor experiences with repairs and maintenance. Many residents described an adversarial relationship with the council, some stated their belief that repairs are slow, the regeneration process is not transparent, residents are not listened to, and the estate is run down. A minority suggested that the Aylesbury has been allowed to become more run down to justify the regeneration.

However others could give specific examples of instances where they had made an impact, or believed that their control and influence has increased. Some residents have been very active in the regeneration process, some for more than a decade, and told of positive experiences and the satisfaction of being involved in this work.

Various explanations were offered about why residents did not feel involved. These included language barriers (and not enough availability of translated materials or interpreters), or barriers connected to social class and low confidence in dealing with institutions and formal processes. Apathy, the length of time the regeneration process has lasted, a lack of trust in the council and to a lesser extent, Notting Hill Housing, and a belief that decisions had already been taken were also cited. Some longer-standing residents referred to the 2001 vote against stock transfer.

Residents voiced many misunderstandings of what is currently being promised. There was a lot of reliance on word-of-mouth communication and local mythologies rather than information provided through agencies. Official communications were often received with distrust, while information passed through word of mouth often had more credibility. One council officer described information flows through complex social networks as “a cobweb situation”. Some agencies also voiced questions about the regeneration, and whether current plans would be realised.

The survey also asked residents about their participation in local groups. Involvement in local community or neighbourhood groups were the most frequent response (this could include TRAs or Creation Trust meetings). Religious groups, and groups for children or young people were the next most common answers. People interviewed identified the absence of a community hub with meeting places and a social space as a barrier to people setting up or participating in local groups. Residents reported that there were few places to go to meet others. The small number of formalised social spaces may also be part of the explanation for the reliance on word-of-mouth communication for information, as there are few places where agencies or community activists can disseminate information or meet residents face to face.

Residents were unclear whether their views were influencing the regeneration. Those who believed they had a voice tended to link this to their approval of the changes they can already see, those who felt unheard voiced criticisms of engagement processes.

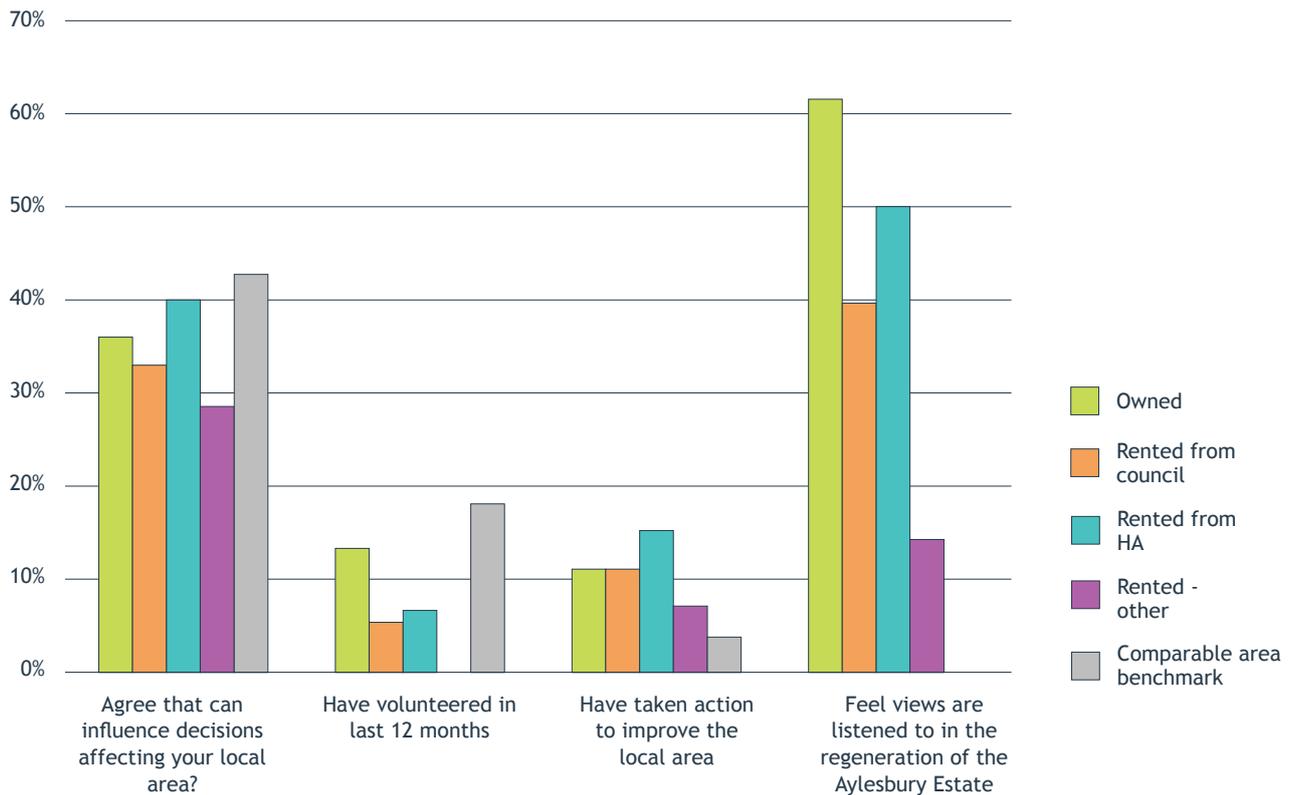
Only 40 per cent of residents gave a view about whether they felt they were being listened to in the regeneration process; the majority of people who voiced an opinion felt they were not being listened to. For some, negative views were associated with their wider opposition to the regeneration plans.

## **“It’s a cobweb situation”**

agency working on the estate

### **The residents survey found that:**

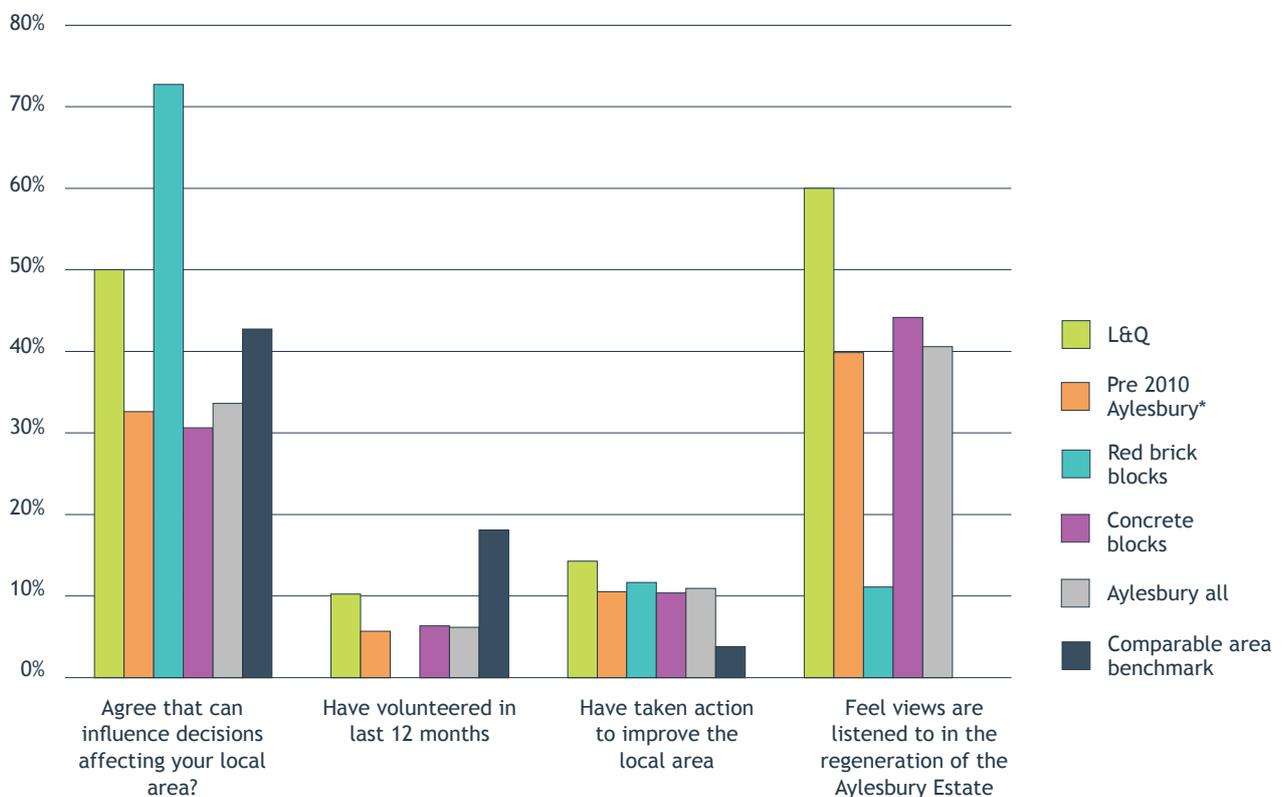
- Aylesbury residents reported lower than expected feelings of influence than residents of comparable areas. When analysed by tenure and development phase, only L&Q residents and residents of the red brick blocks emerged as having higher feelings of influence than comparable areas.
- Residents were less likely to take part in voluntary work than would be expected, although they were more likely to have taken action to improve the area.
- The most common action taken to improve the local environment was to contact the council.
- Residents of the red brick blocks were most likely to feel they can influence local decisions, but conversely less likely to feel they were listened to in the regeneration of the estate. Residents of the concrete blocks reported the opposite, that they felt less able to influence local decisions but that their views about the regeneration were more likely to be listened to.
- When the results were analysed by tenure, homeowners and housing association tenants emerged as feeling most influential, both in the neighbourhood and within the regeneration process. Private renters reported the lowest sense of influence, perhaps unsurprising given that they have no legal relationship to the council.



**Figure 19: Voice and influence, attitudes and actions, by tenure**

Number of responses vary by question, from 138 to 346. Average responses to question = 266

Number of responses for comparable area = 110 to 1,860

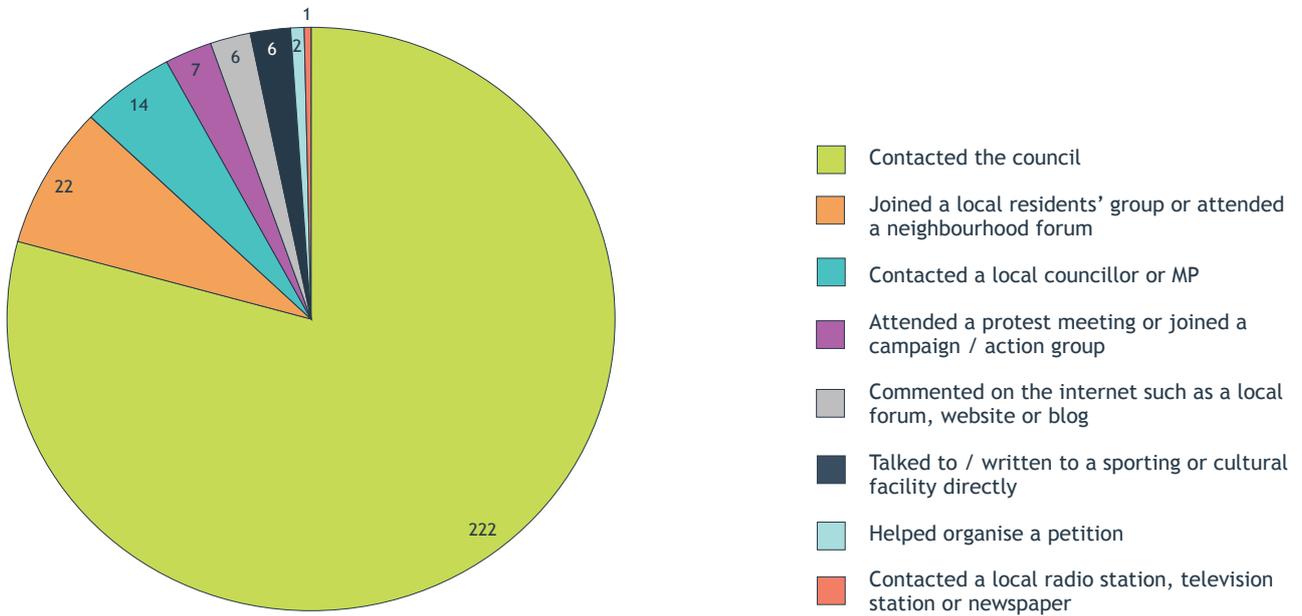


**Figure 20: Voice and influence, attitudes and actions, by development phase**

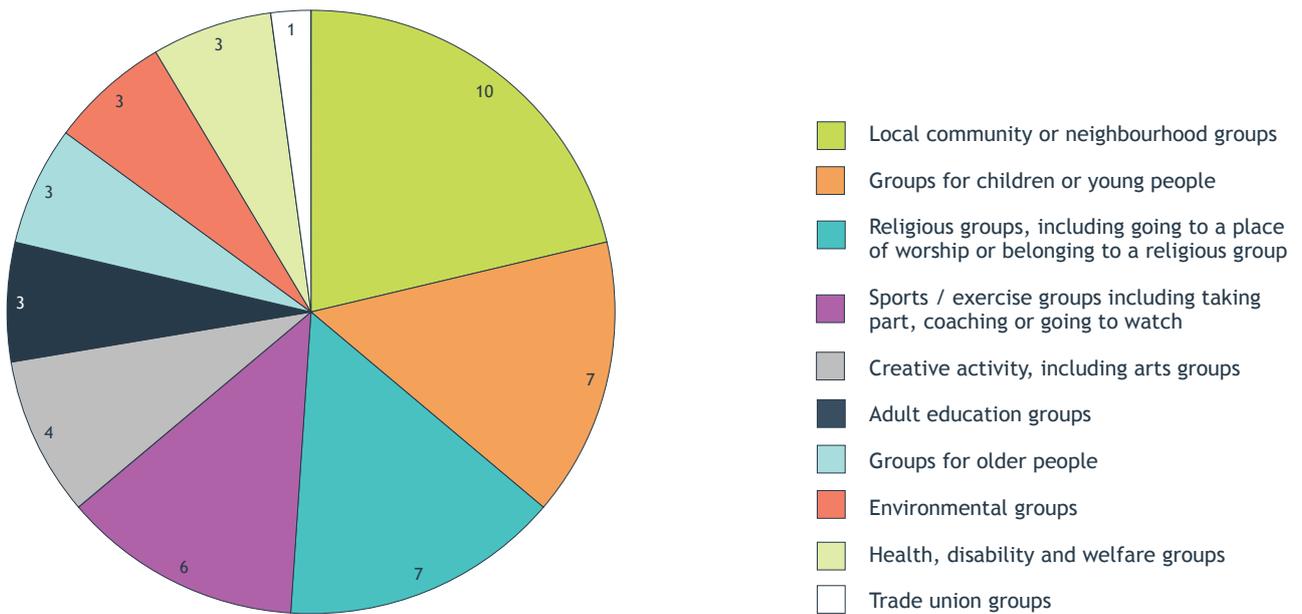
Number of responses vary by question, from 153 to 356. Average responses to question = 276

Number of responses for comparable area = 110 to 1,860

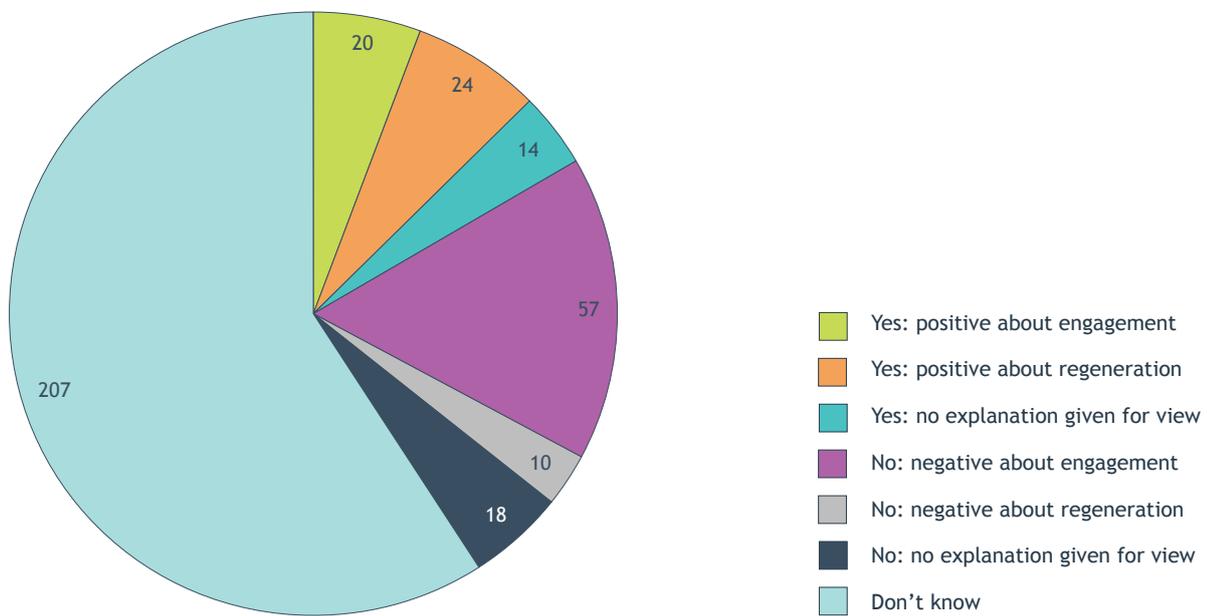
\* "Pre 2010 Aylesbury" refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.



**Figure 21: Residents' actions to improve the neighbourhood**  
Number of responses = 358



**Figure 22: Residents who participated in groups, by activity**  
Number of responses = 47



**Figure 23: Do you feel that your views are being listened to in the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate?**  
 Number of responses = 350

# Amenities and Social Infrastructure

“Amenities & Social Infrastructure” captures the services and the physical structures that are needed to support individual wellbeing and collective community activities, as well as local social life. It includes services such as health and education, transport and parks, as well as the impact of the design of the physical environment.

The overall assessment of “amenities and social infrastructure” is mixed. The physical condition of the estate, and the lack of community spaces and infrastructure, is not supportive of residents’ individual and collective wellbeing. However transport, schools, health services and the nearby parks are all strong local assets.

The residents survey asked about what contributed most to residents’ quality of life. The four factors that were mentioned most frequently were “transport or ease of getting around”, “shops and East Street Market”, the “park, outdoor space or green space”, and “schools”. Residents report that they are more satisfied with the local area as a place to live than others living in comparable places.

Transport links are good, to the centre of London and to other parts of south London. Health services, schools and childcare, transport and local parks are all perceived very positively, the majority of services are responding well to the complex needs of the estate’s residents. Burgess Park, since its redesign in 2012, is almost universally seen as an asset for all ages. The Creation Trust, the successor body to the NDC, provides employment services and a wide range of activities and support for the community. Some third sector organisations active on the estate have closed or declined after the ending of NDC funding.

There is a lack of community space and facilities on the estate, considering the size of the population. Spaces for particular groups that used to be funded through the NDC no longer exist, and the Amersham Hall, the former social centre of the estate, was demolished in 2007. There are some well used, informal social spaces, including the roof of one block, which is popular with young people; corridors and walkways outside flats; and local takeaways, which are particularly important to children and young people coming out of school. For many residents, the good transport links to specific social centres are important; the proximity to Peckham is important to people from the Nigerian community, the bus routes to the Elephant and Castle’s markets, traders and social spaces to Latin Americans.

Residents frequently commented on the poor external condition of the estate, although they almost unanimously praised the internal size and designs of their homes. The most common problem cited was the heating system, often reported to have failed for significant lengths of time, in some cases months.

The lifts and dark stairwells were described as badly designed, and potential magnets for anti-social intimidating behaviour.

Open spaces on the estate tend to be ambiguous in purpose and poorly used. Linkages between spaces are confusing and sometimes end abruptly, often because of past efforts to improve safety by blocking alleyways and short cuts. The layout of the estate and the numbering of blocks can be bewildering for visitors, this was mentioned as a problem by GPs doing home visits. Some outside areas (including play areas) can feel intimidating, especially those close to empty undercrofts. These are now fenced off but were originally designed for parking. There were frequent reports from residents and agencies of homeless people sleeping in car parks, stairs and corridors.

Residents have made some efforts to reshape the external environment, and there are some lush balconies and gardens, occasional examples of carefully executed public art and graffiti, and a flourishing but small community garden.

Many residents were conscious of how the estate was perceived by people who do not live in the area. Several interviewees spoke about how they value the inside of their homes and other positive features of life on the estate; whilst recognising the estate's negative reputation, describing how they resented or felt ashamed of this. Some residents of the red brick blocks reported that their homes did not suffer the aesthetic or maintenance issues that plague the 1970s slab blocks, but were still stigmatised as part of the estate.

The police, and some residents, were concerned about the impact of the increasing number of empty blocks and flats on safety, reporting that some local crime was increasing. Their concern was that empty unobserved spaces could attract criminal activity.

**“We love the area.**

**We’ve got so  
much”**

comment at over 55s  
discussion group

**“People are living  
in an estate not fit  
for purpose”**

local community  
stakeholder



Figure 24: A garden on the estate



**Parks, gardens, playgrounds, and sport facilities**

1. Art in the Park
2. Burgess Park Adventure Playground
3. Surrey Square Park
4. Faraday Gardens
5. Chumleigh Gardens
6. Southwark Tigers Rugby Club
7. Burgess Park BMX
8. Lynn Boxing Academy
9. Burgess Park outdoor gym
10. Southwark Tennis Club
11. Informal community meeting space
12. Dawes Street playground & MUGA
13. Thurlow Street MUGA
14. Small MUGA
15. Young children's play space
16. Informal play space
17. Benches
18. Playground
19. Aylesbury outdoor gym

**Education**

20. Michael Faraday Primary School
21. Walworth Academy
22. Surrey Square Junior School
23. Sacred Heart RC Secondary School
24. Saint John's Walworth Church
25. Dyason pre-school

**Faith and religious**

26. St Peters Church of England
27. Pembroke House Community Garden
28. Pembroke House Church and Community Centre
29. St Johns Walworth Church
30. Old Kent Road Mosque and Islamic Centre
31. Walworth Methodist Church
32. East Street Baptist Church

**Health**

33. Aylesbury Health Centre
34. Aylesbury Medical Centre
35. Villa Medical Centre

**Community facilities**

36. Creation Trust
37. InSpire at the Crypt at St Peter's
38. Thurlow Lodge Community Hall
39. Golden Oldies Community Care Project
40. Informal outdoor meeting place
41. Informal meeting place for young people
42. Southwark Community Resource
43. Play cabin
44. Community garden
45. 2Inspire: youth training and arts
46. SE17 Working Programme Centre
47. Wells Way Pop Up

**Early years**

48. Tykes Corner Nursery
49. Aylesbury Early Years Centre
50. Burgess Park Nursery

**Food, shops, and markets**

51. Burgess Park Café
52. East Street Market
53. Merrow Corner Store
54. Grove Food and Wine
55. Chris Convenient Store
56. Londis Store
57. Arments - Pie, Mash & Eels
58. Convenience Store
59. Susan Coin Wash Laundrette
60. The Hour Glass pub and hotel
61. Dambuk - Afro Caribbean grocery food and wine
62. Shanghai Surprise
63. East Street shops

**Safety**

64. Walworth Police Station
65. Londis Store - safe house
66. East Street Library - safe house
67. Safe route
68. CCTV
69. CCTV

Figure 25: An asset map of the Aylesbury Estate. Blue line indicates the boundary of the Aylesbury Estate

### The residents survey found that:

- Overall, satisfaction with facilities was higher among people living in the red brick blocks and the new L&Q housing than the 1970s system-built concrete blocks
- Housing association tenants - the relatively small numbers living in the new L&Q blocks - were more satisfied with facilities than people living in other tenures
- Council tenants tended to be fairly satisfied overall with local facilities, except for housing choices and provision for older children and young people. Overall, homeowners expressed the lowest satisfaction with services and facilities out of all the tenure groups.

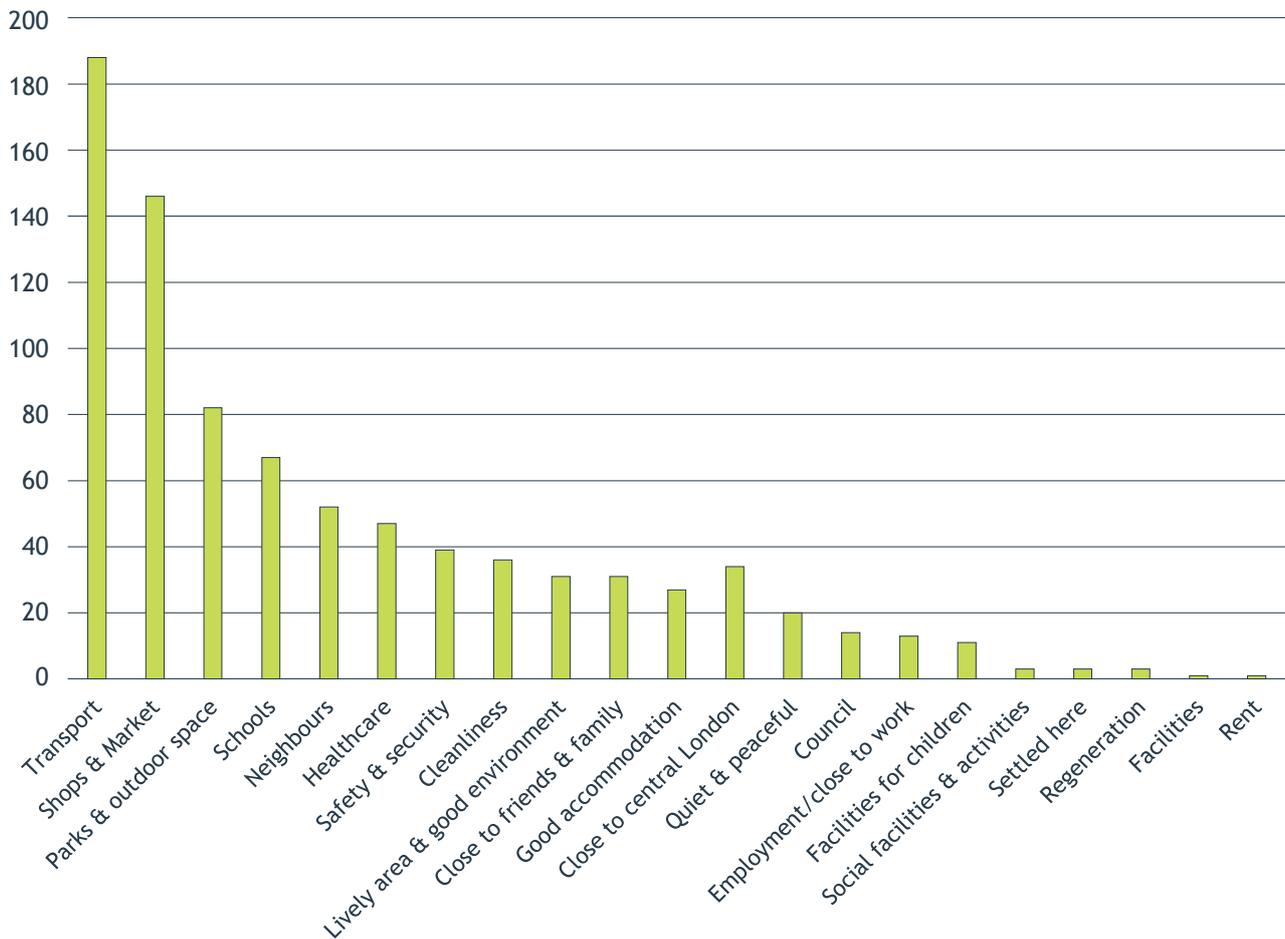
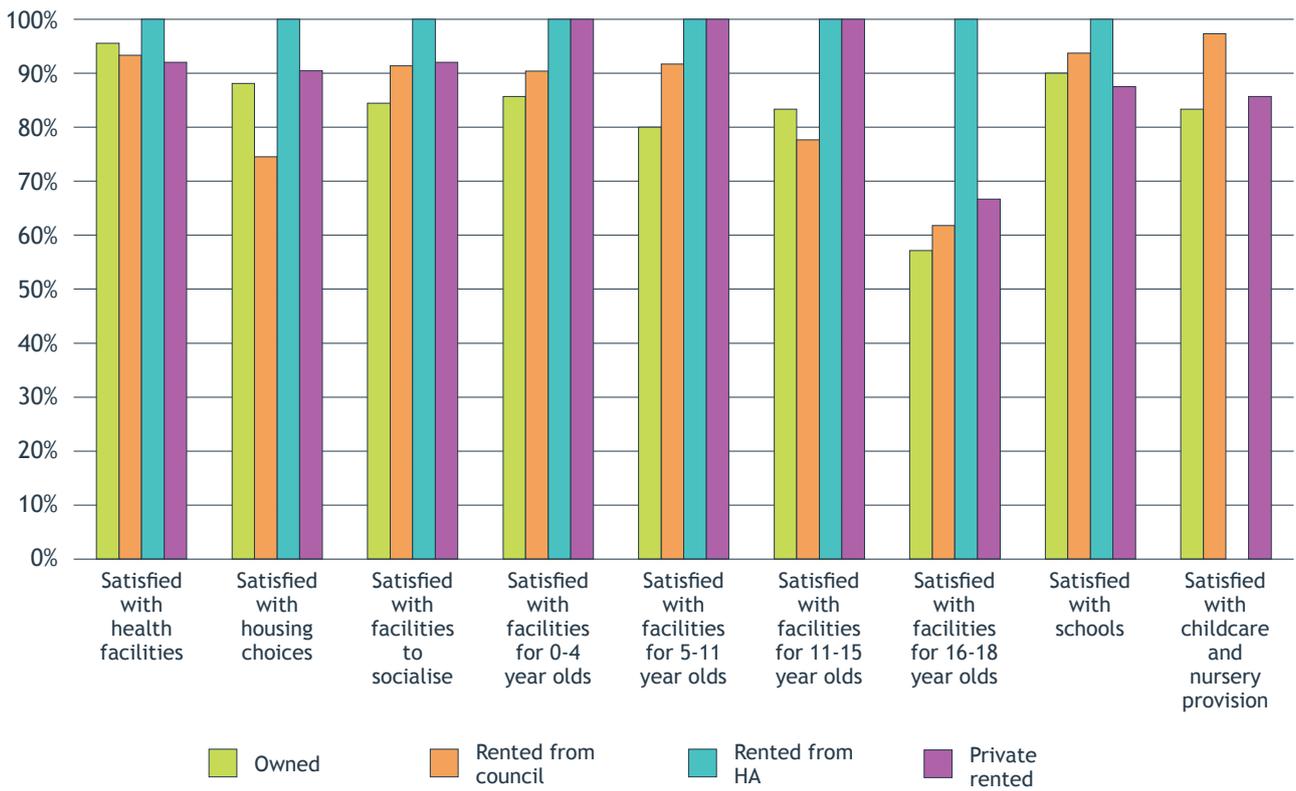
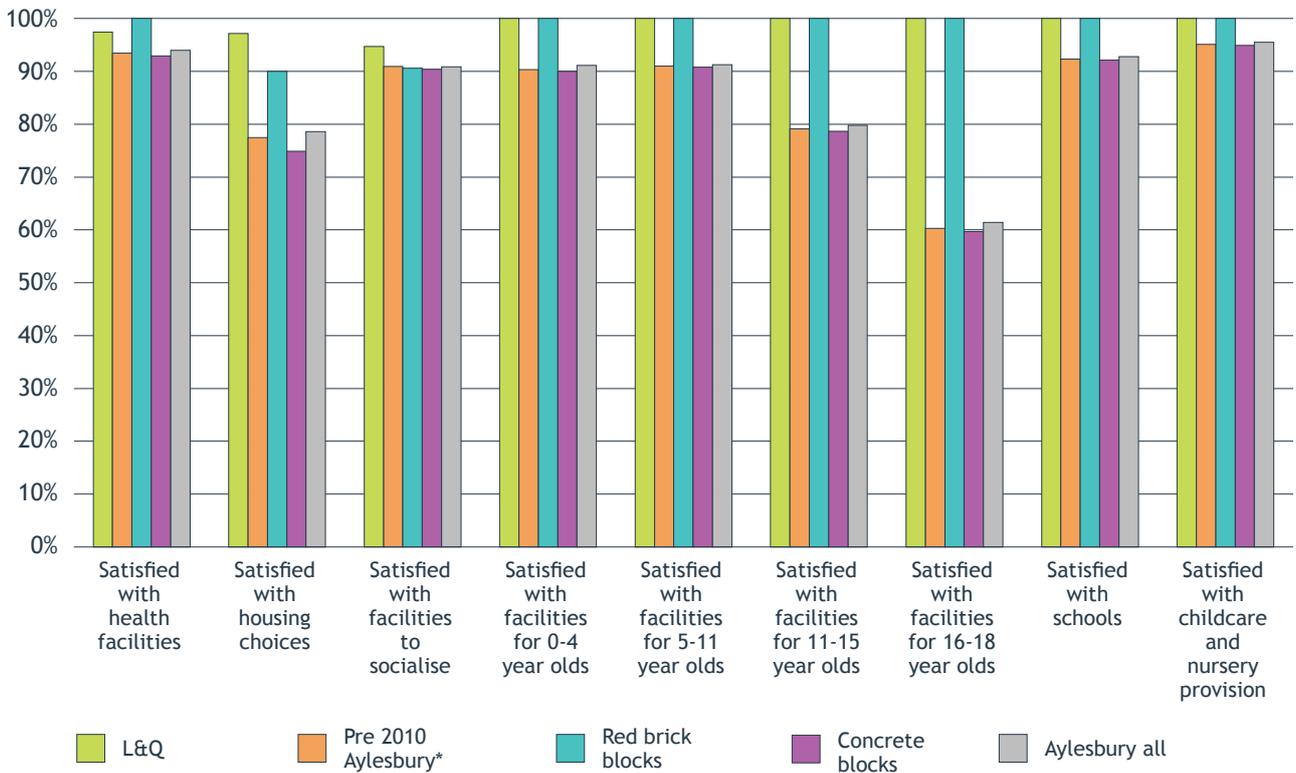


Figure 26: What three factors contribute most to your quality of life?  
Number of responses = 333



**Figure 27: Satisfaction with facilities by tenure**

Number of responses vary by question, from 341 to 66. Average responses to question = 179



**Figure 28: Satisfaction with facilities by development phase**

Number of responses vary by question, from 341 to 66. Average responses to question = 179

\* "Pre 2010 Aylesbury" refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.

## Social and Cultural Life

“Social & Cultural Life” describes how residents feel about their life in an area. This includes their wellbeing, whether people feel they belong in the area, fear of crime, and relationships with neighbours and between different groups.

The Aylesbury was described by some individuals as having a supportive community, and simultaneously by others as having lost a level of community solidarity that was evident in the past. In part this is simply because different groups hold particular views. For those who felt the loss over time - often older or long-standing residents - change for the worse was frequently associated with different groups moving into the estate. However others, including newer residents, reported strong if low-key neighbourly interactions, and acceptance of newcomers. These often revolved around the corridors, walkways or discrete parts of blocks. For people arriving on the estate from difficult and traumatic circumstances, the social solidarity and acceptance was reported to be a welcome respite from their difficult lives.

Newer residents are bringing their own sense of “community”, and neighbourliness to the estate. This was recognised by some long-standing residents who simultaneously described the estate as neighbourly and welcoming, particularly to newly arrived residents, yet also articulated a sense of loss because of the extent of change.

Interviews with residents and agencies revealed a variety of perspectives about the Aylesbury Estate’s sense of community. Most reported that there is a sense of community, if not a strong one. However, there was a significant minority that believed there was little or no sense of community on the estate, or that this is now less than in the past.

Residents overall reported high levels of belonging, and relationships were generally good between people from different ethnic and social backgrounds, and different tenures. This is relatively recent - some residents described overt racism as recently as the late 1990s. A small number of interviewees said that they felt uncomfortable with different groups for various reasons, a small minority of both white and black residents voiced prejudiced views.

In the new L&Q homes, different tenures are generally grouped together within blocks. This is different to the rest of the estate, where leaseholder flats are distributed randomly as a consequence of individual tenants’ decisions to exercise their right to buy. L&Q residents reported less mixing across tenures. However former council tenants rehoused in L&Q properties reported, with appreciation, that their social relationships had survived rehousing because their new flats are close to the neighbours they had before they moved.

In recent years, two demographic trends were described: on one hand increasing poverty and transience, and on the other increased

**“There is a spirit of community. Believe me, in this area of London, people are happy to offer an ear... There’s a remarkable community spirit. All races, black, white, Muslim, all come together”**

black man in his 40s,  
council tenant

polarisation around social class, reflecting wider changes in the neighbourhood, including the sale of the Church Commissioners housing adjacent to the estate to new landlords letting homes on significantly higher rents.

There was a strong consensus among residents and agencies that the Aylesbury Estate is no longer a dangerous place, and that crime is far lower on the estate than the public tend to believe. In the residents survey fear of crime was similar to comparable areas, but higher than the national average. For a minority of the estate's residents, however, particularly those who are most marginalised and living in the least secure housing, the estate can be a hostile place to live.

Overall, wellbeing is higher than in the rest of London, and in comparable areas. The residents survey used the short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to understand levels of wellbeing on the estate.<sup>10</sup> Southwark & Lambeth's public health team used the same scale in residents surveys carried out in 2012 to 2013 to explore wellbeing across the two boroughs.<sup>11</sup> The Southwark average score was 27.3, slightly higher than the average response in the Aylesbury residents survey of 26.6 (scores higher than 25 indicate higher reports of wellbeing).

In general, residents are happy with the area as a place to live. However, the negative portrayal of the estate in the past - in different films, TV series, and in the Channel 4 ident - is resented by residents, and some have internalised this, leading to feelings of shame. However, when asked in the residents survey how they described the area they live, nearly 70 per cent said that they would tell others that they live on the Aylesbury Estate, suggesting that the stigma is not as great as some suggest.

**“It’s where I’ve lived all my life. I know my neighbours, I feel at home”**

white British woman in her 60s, L&Q tenant

**Do you feel safe?  
“Yes most of the time. Depending on what the season is. Winter is more dark. There are people in the blocks smoking”**

Asian British in 20s, Chiltern



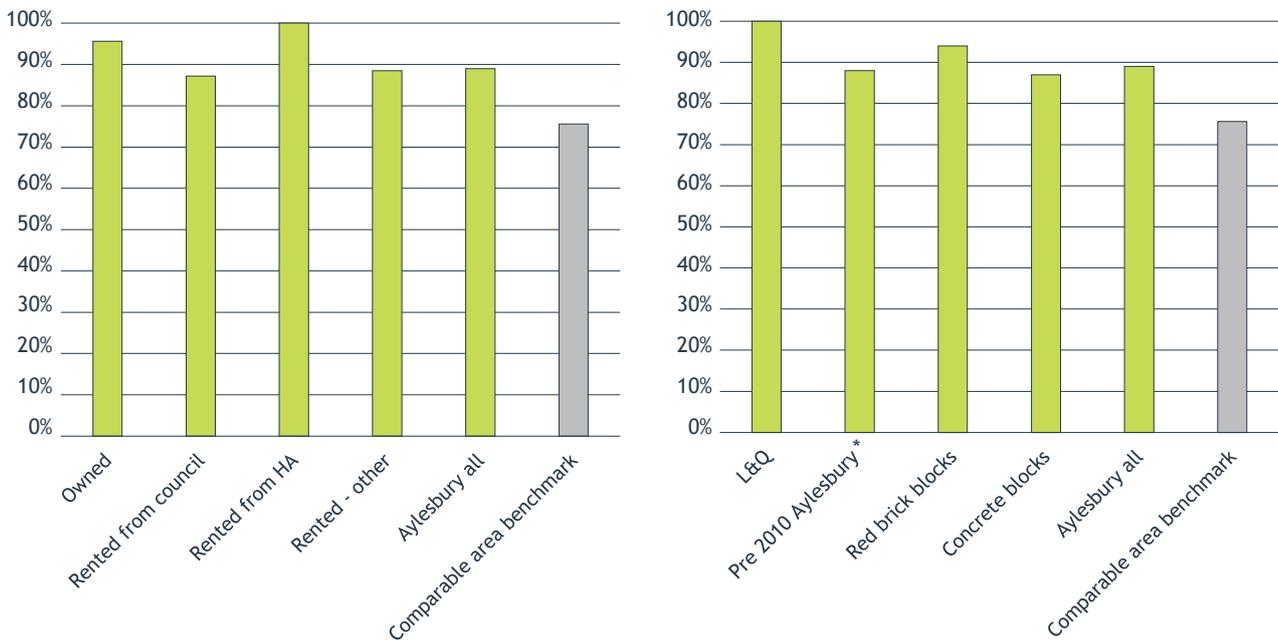
Figure 29: Mural on the exterior of a shop on the edge of the estate

**“One thing you do notice, is that people from other places are the ones who greet you”**

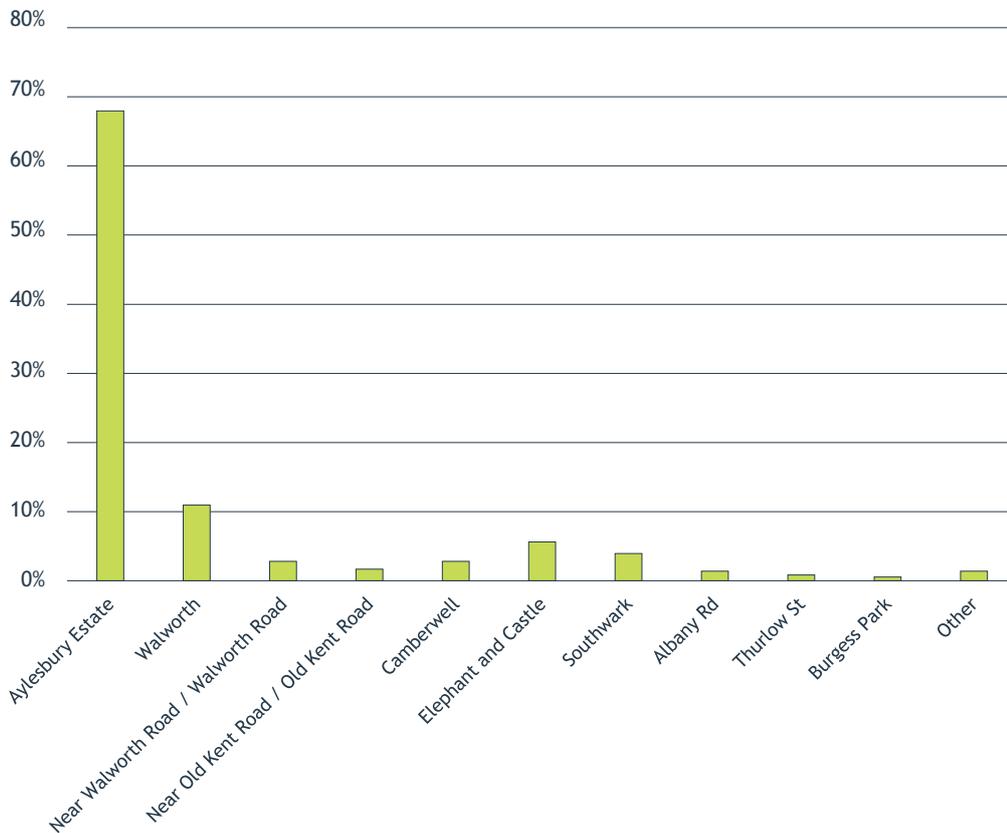
older white tenant in discussion group

### **The residents survey found that:**

- Generally residents were happy with the area as a place to live. Satisfaction with the area was lower among council tenants and highest among housing association tenants, home owners, people living in the red brick blocks, and people living in new L&Q homes. However all tenures, and types of housing, had a higher level of satisfaction with the area than comparable areas.
- Overall, neighbourliness, belonging and community cohesion were higher than in comparable areas.
- Neighbourliness was broadly similar across tenures, and different phases of the estate, but slightly higher among housing association tenants, and weaker among private tenants. For the majority of neighbourliness questions, scores were higher than comparable areas for all tenures and phases.
- Residents living in L&Q homes and those living in the red brick blocks were more likely than those living in the concrete blocks to say that they planned to remain resident in the neighbourhood for a number of years, and that they felt they belonged to the neighbourhood. Private renters were least likely to give positive answers to these questions, although their responses were still relatively high, above the score for the comparable area.
- Homeowners, private renters, L&Q residents and people living in the red brick blocks were more likely to feel positive about community cohesion than other residents. Council tenants and people living in the concrete blocks were least confident about good relationships between different backgrounds, although overall their responses are not low.
- Perceptions of safety were similar to comparable areas, but lower than the UK average.
- Council tenants felt less safe than others after dark and are least likely to believe that crime on the Aylesbury is lower than in other areas. People renting from L&Q felt safest in all dimensions, possibly reflecting their location on the edge of the estate close to transport routes.
- Residents on the Aylesbury reported higher wellbeing than both the London and comparable area average.
- Wellbeing was highest among housing association tenants and private tenants. It was lowest among council tenants.
- The residents survey also asked about residents’ satisfaction with their lives. This question is often regarded as a useful proxy for overall wellbeing. The majority of people reported that they were mostly satisfied with their lives, higher than in comparable areas.

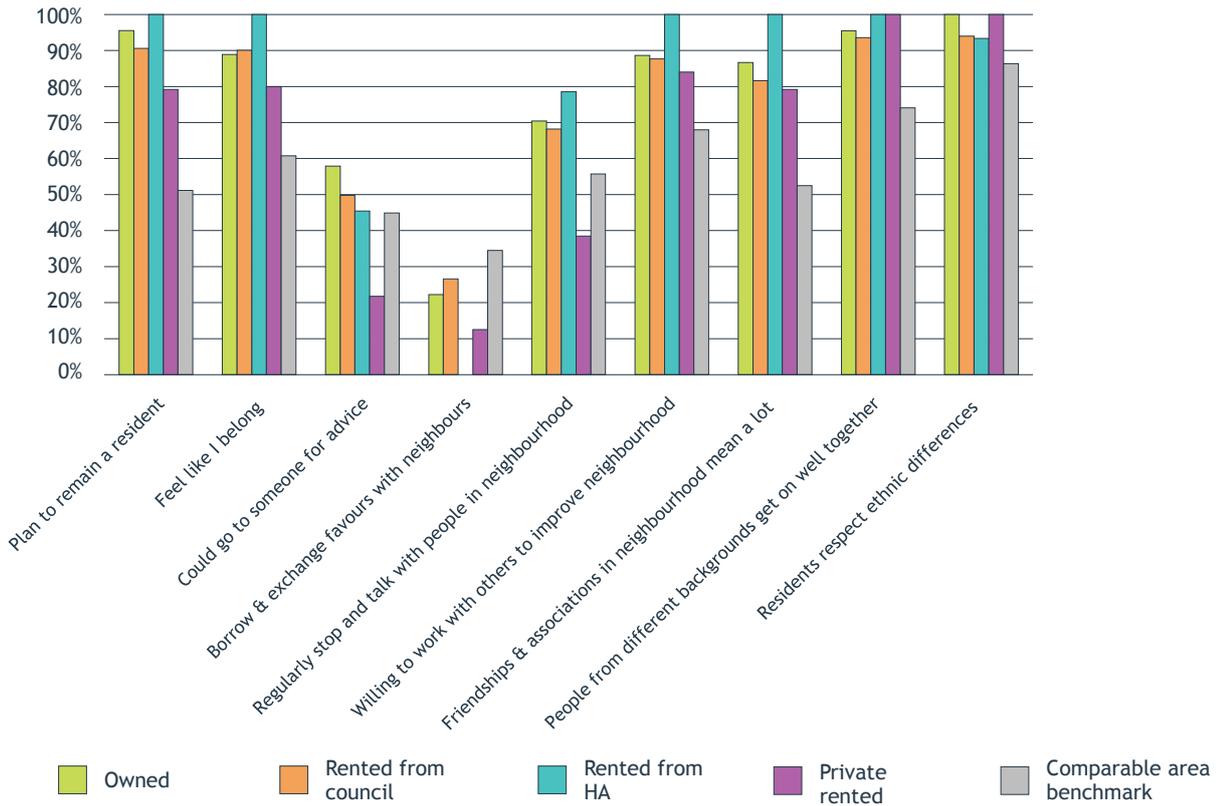


**Figure 30: Percentage of residents satisfied with the area as a place to live, by tenure and development phase**  
 Number of responses = 344 and 355  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 119 to 800

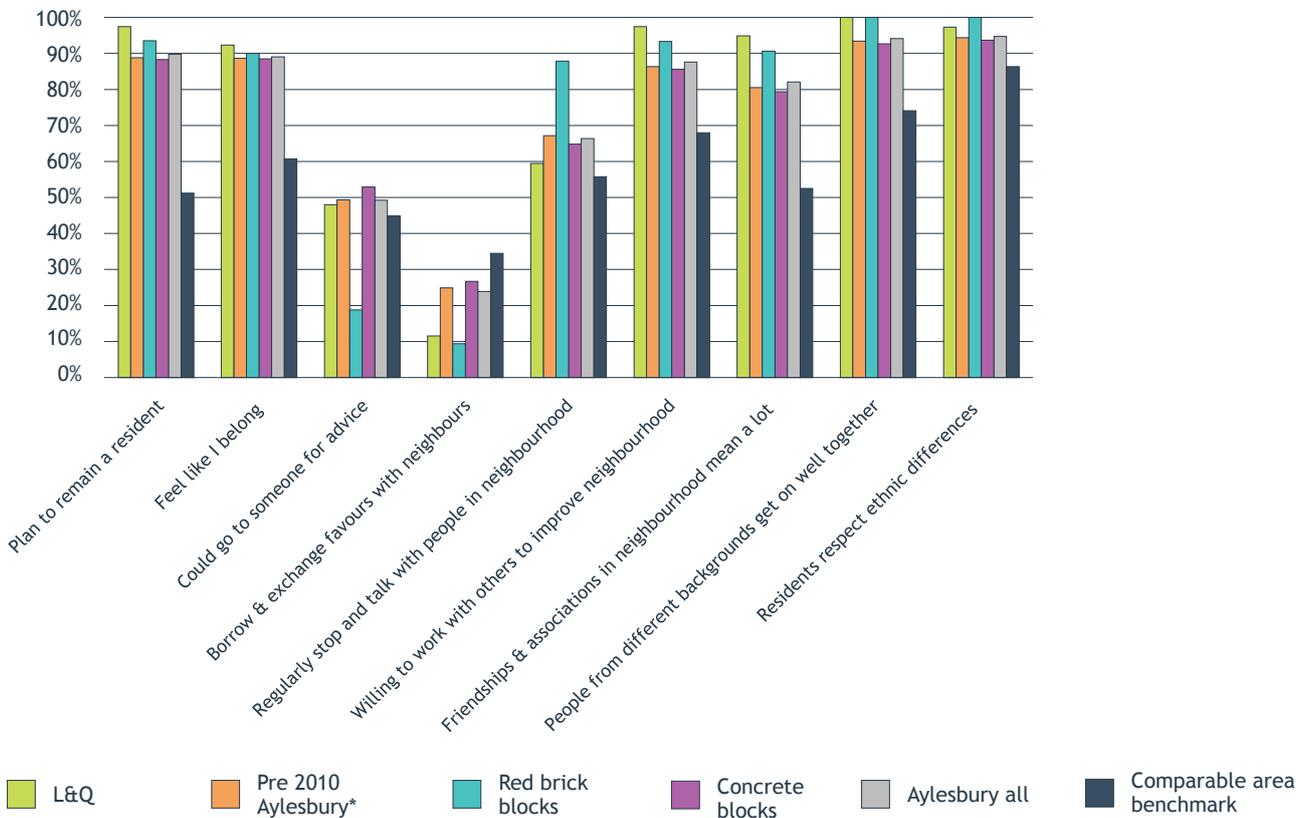


**Figure 31: How residents of the Aylesbury estate describe the place they live**  
 Number of responses: 356

\* "Pre 2010 Aylesbury" refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.

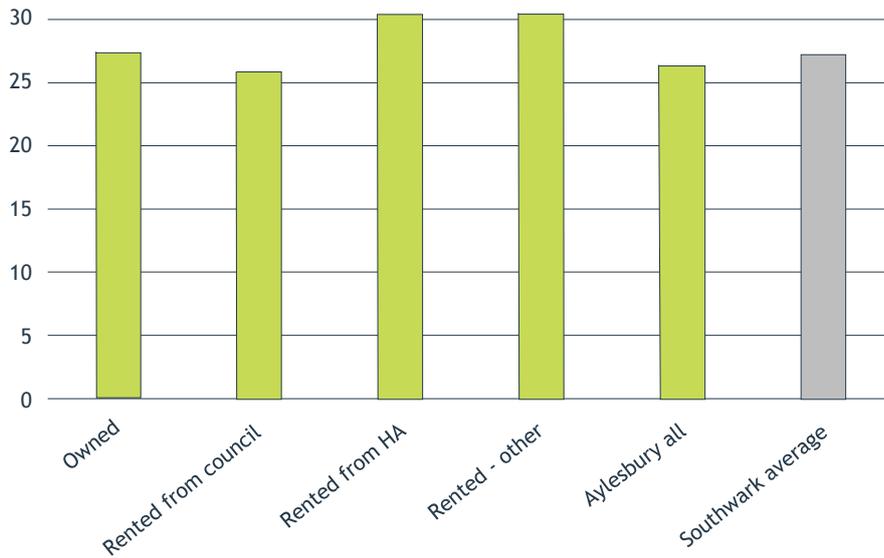


**Figure 32: Residents' attitudes to their neighbourhood and neighbours, by tenure**  
 Number of responses vary by question, from 354 to 323. Average responses to question = 343  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 66 to 800

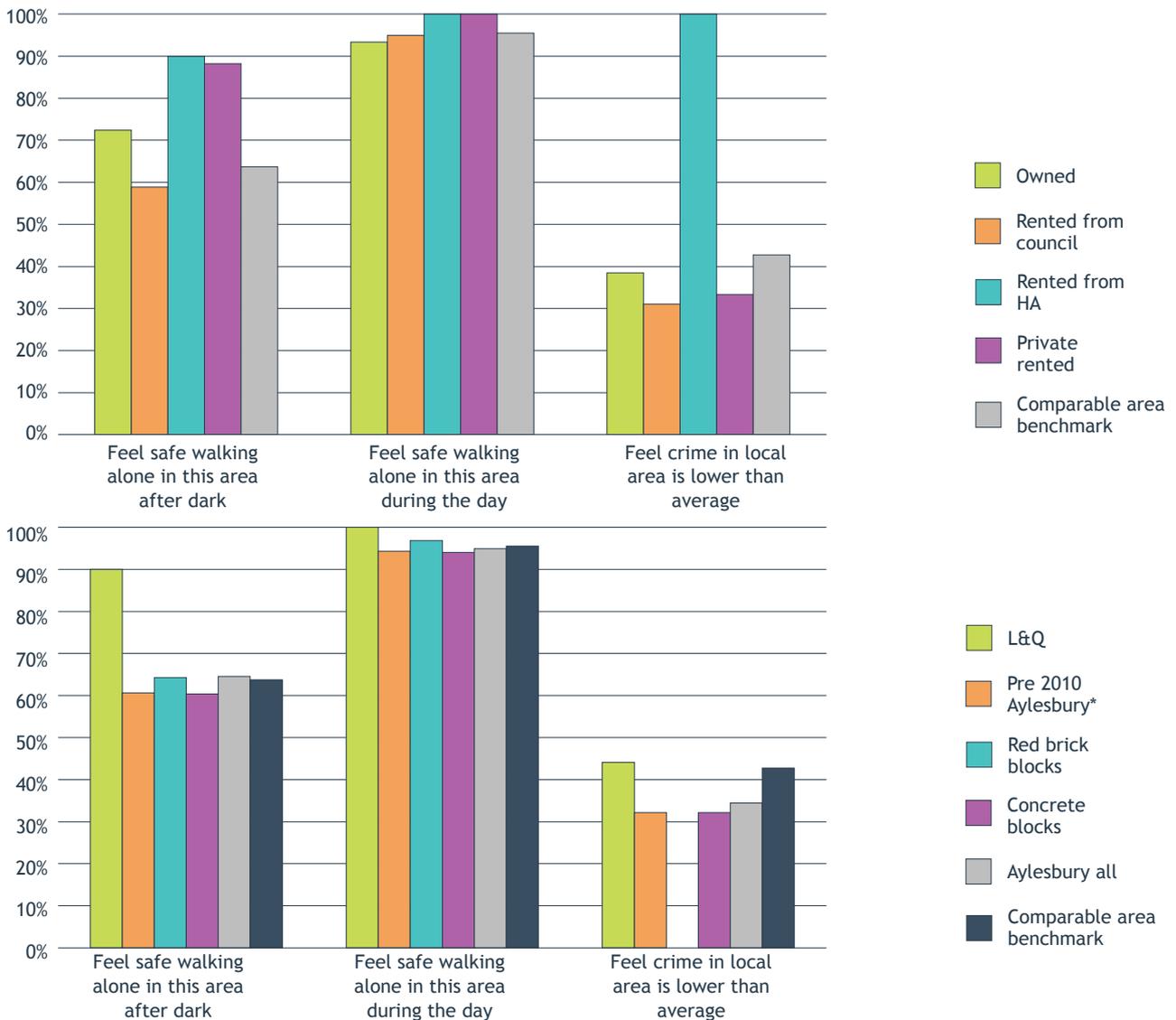


**Figure 33: Residents' attitudes to their neighbourhood and neighbours, by development phase**  
 Number of responses to residents survey varies by question, from 354 to 323. Average responses to question = 343.  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 66 to 800

\* "Pre 2010 Aylesbury" refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.



**Figure 34: Warwick-Edinburgh wellbeing scores, by tenure**  
 Number of responses = 335 residents survey, 416 Southwark survey  
 Scores have been converted from raw to metric scores



**Figure 35: Perceptions of crime, by tenure (top) and development phase (bottom)**  
 Number of responses vary by question, from 355 to 180. Average responses to question = 253  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 5,704 to 7,851

\* "Pre 2010 Aylesbury" refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.

## Adaptability and Resilience

“Adaptability & Resilience” are future facing, describing the capacities in individuals, and in the wider community and infrastructure, that enable residents to adapt to changing circumstances and to be resilient, to bounce back in the face of adversity.

Living on the Aylesbury Estate offers residents the benefit of a number of protective factors that can help them get by in the face of challenging life circumstances. These include the good public services, particularly health and education; good transport links to access work and wider support networks; the proximity of Burgess Park; social solidarity and tolerance between different groups; and neighbourly and often friendly relationships between people living in close proximity.

The population of the Aylesbury was frequently described as “resilient” by agencies and community stakeholders; this was associated with residents’ ability to get by in a difficult environment, and their ability to adapt to a new country or neighbourhood, sometimes after leaving, or even fleeing, harsh and dangerous circumstances.

A significant number of Aylesbury residents live on very low incomes, 53% of resident survey respondents who could, or were willing to, reveal their annual household income said that it was £14,000 or less. Many were reported to depend on the food banks in Peckham and near the Old Kent Road although it was not possible to estimate this number from this research. The residents survey asked “how well would you say you are managing financially these days?” and a similar question about paying housing costs. Two thirds of those surveyed reported that they were “doing alright” to both questions (fewer than 20 per cent stated that they were “living comfortably”). Four per cent said that they were struggling financially, finding it quite or very difficult. The numbers of people giving positive answers is higher than in comparable areas, and higher than anecdotal evidence suggests. It is possible that residents felt that they could not give honest answers to this question, or that there are aspects of life on the Aylesbury that are helping people manage financially in spite of profound poverty.

The estate’s strong, but low-key, social networks appear to be helping to support people on very low incomes to manage their daily life. Conversations also unearthed evidence of informal support, of loans given by churches, shopkeepers, and friends and family to tide people over. These transactions create networks of co-dependency that can help people manage circumstances that might otherwise be unbearable.

The key issue undermining residents’ economic resilience is poor quality - low paid or insecure - work rather than complete unemployment, although this is a problem for some. Agencies described low skills and confidence, and high unmet need for English language lessons.

**“In the past  
I’ve been  
surprised about  
employment not  
being the worst,  
a lot of it is a  
perception about  
Aylesbury rather  
than the reality”**

employment project  
officer

**“In the 1980s and 1990s if I could have prescribed one thing apart from medicines, it would have been work. Now I would prescribe housing”**

local GP

Many residents were reported to be working in more than one job, often informally, for example painting and decorating, cooking, baking or selling scrap metal. Language barriers could limit work choices. Those managing the difficulties of informal housing arrangements may also be dealing with the uncertainty of informal employment - both make individuals vulnerable to exploitation.

Local businesses, especially retailers and traders, are feeling the impact of local demographic changes and a shifting customer base. East St Market traders and local convenience shop owners reported that they felt under threat. The emptying of the Heygate Estate had reduced their customer numbers; Westmoreland Road shops reported that the new L&Q residents were not using local shops as much as former residents had in the past.

The main vulnerability facing Aylesbury residents is poverty and the difficulties of depending on poor quality, insecure work. More people than the average are dealing with mental health problems, and residents can also be affected by the stress of insecure, sometimes not legal, relationships with landlords and employers. A small group of people living on the estate are extremely vulnerable, sleeping in corridors, undercrofts, car parks and stairwells.

Uncertainties raised by the regeneration plans can cause stress and anxiety, and certain aspects of navigating the changes are reported to be particularly bewildering. Finding housing through Southwark Homesearch, the borough’s choice-based lettings system, can be confusing and anxious for some, although other residents that had done this successfully reported a smooth rehousing process.

One service provider cited the most vulnerable people as West Africans with no rights to stay, constantly battling deportation,



Figure 36: Flowers on a balcony

moving from one place to another, often sleeping on sofas. Women in their 30s and 40s with no children were also described as precarious, finding it more difficult than mothers with children to call on community support. Young people can also be vulnerable in a difficult environment and can be pressurised to take part in risky activities. Some long-standing older residents were identified as being vulnerable in the face of change, this includes the white population but also older people from Somalia and West Africa.

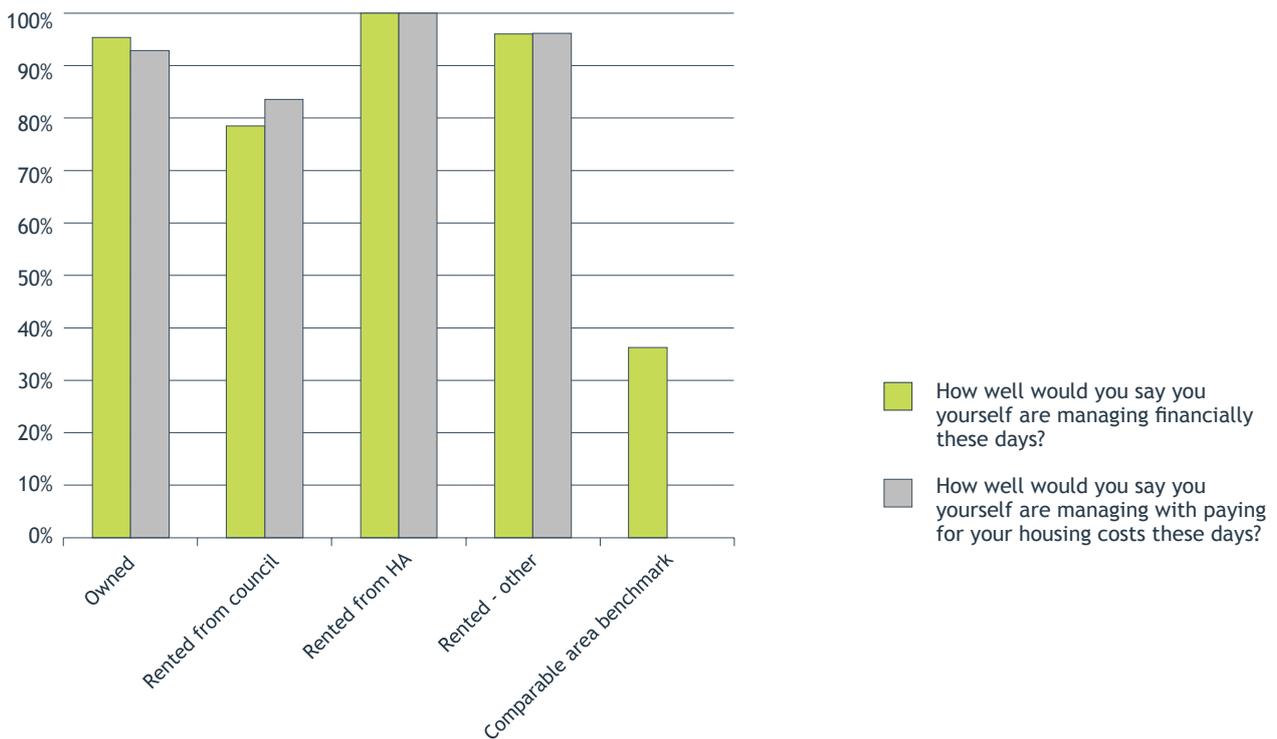
Different communities were described as having different strengths and weaknesses. Latin Americans were portrayed as entrepreneurial, but quite isolated. The Nigerian community was seen as being strong with networks and support services based in Peckham. Eastern Europeans who speak English are believed to do well, those who do not may have a more precarious experience. Chinese labourers, usually single men, were identified as a group that were more likely to be living in appalling conditions, living very different lives to the growing number of stable Chinese families on the estate.

Residents reported, and agencies confirmed, that the Aylesbury Estate is largely a place that welcomes and absorbs new groups with relative ease. One service provider described how the estate had become more benign as a result of changing migration patterns, how families from Africa and China were setting high expectations for their children at school and enforcing social control through family networks. Some residents however believed the opposite, that changing demographics were undermining social norms and social bonds.

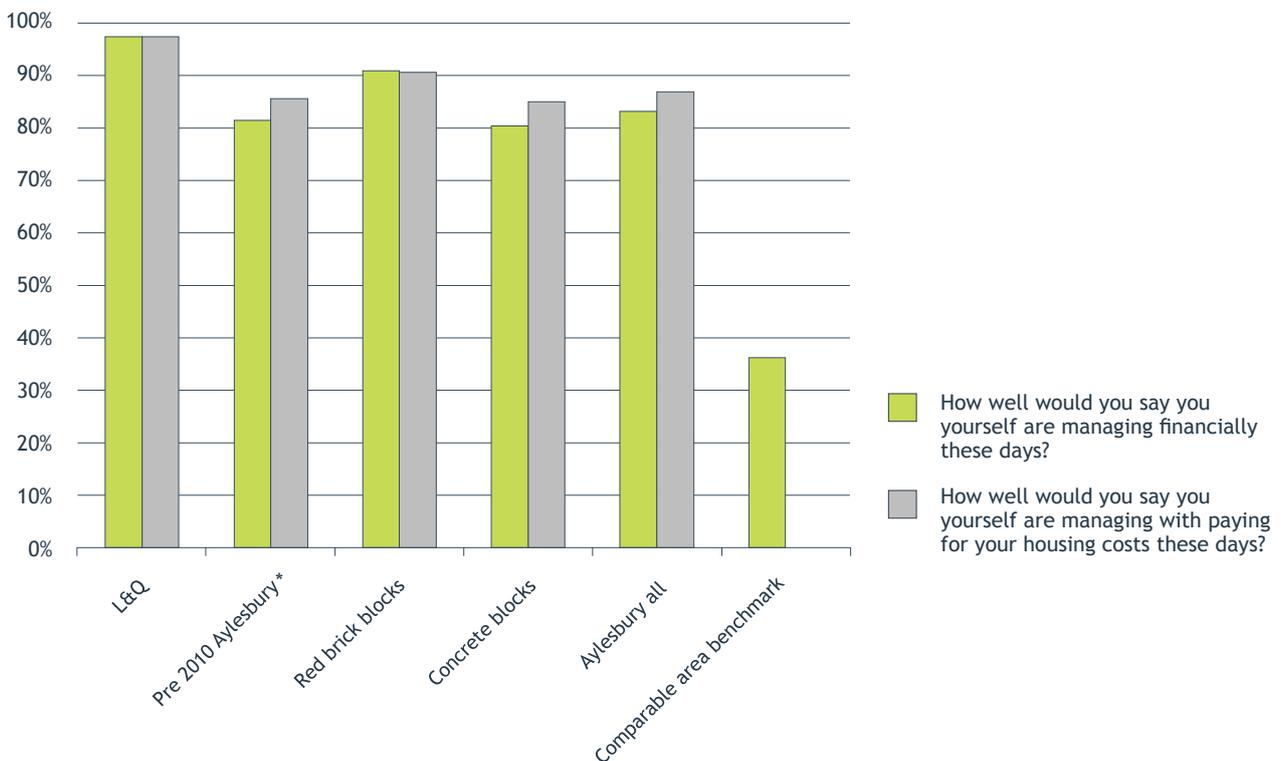
The new feature of demographic change is in the social class and incomes of people living on and around the estate. The areas adjacent to the estate are becoming more affluent, and this trend will increasingly affect the estate itself as the regeneration programme rolls out and more residents pay market prices for their homes. Residents are aware of this and many voice concerns that the neighbourhood, in the future, will not be “for them”.

### **The residents survey found that:**

- When asked about how well they are managing financially, and how well they are managing to pay their housing costs, a minority said they were living comfortably, the majority (around two thirds of those who answered the question) said they were “doing alright”. This is high considering the low household incomes people are living on, and scores are above those that would be expected for comparable areas.
- When answers were analysed by tenure, council tenants reported most financial strain, especially in managing their housing costs.
- When analysed by development phase, residents of L&Q homes and the red brick blocks reported feeling more financially stable than the concrete blocks. Anxieties were highest about housing costs.

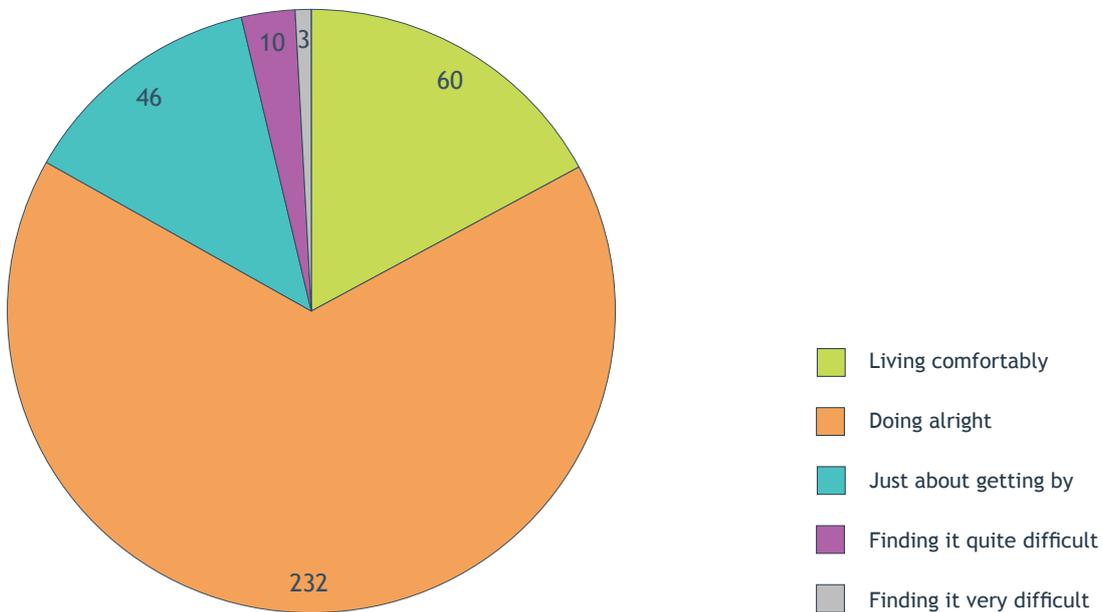


**Figure 37: Positive responses to “How well are you managing financially these days?” and “How well are you managing with paying for your housing costs these days?”, by tenure**  
 Number of responses (tenure) = 339  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 1,054 (no comparable area data available for housing costs question)

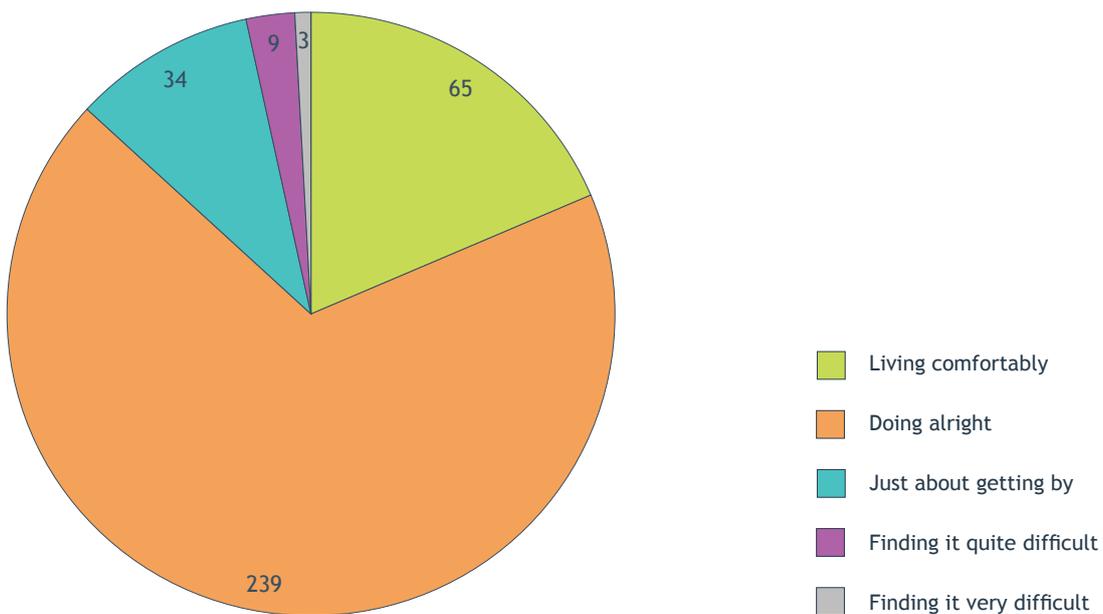


**Figure 38: Positive responses to “How well are you managing financially these days?” and “How well are you managing with paying for your housing costs these days?”, by development phase**  
 Number of response (development phase) = 338  
 Number of responses for comparable area = 1,054 (no comparable area data available for housing costs question)

\* “Pre 2010 Aylesbury” refers to all the homes built before 2010. This includes the concrete blocks, and the red brick blocks.



**Figure 39: Residents' responses to "How well would you say you yourself are managing financially these days?"**  
 Number of responses = 351



**Figure 40: Residents' responses to "How well would you say you yourself are managing with paying for your housing costs these days?"**  
 Number of responses = 350

## 7. Residents' views of regeneration

The residents survey asked for views about the regeneration of the Aylesbury, although this was not the primary aim of this research. 46 per cent of the total were in favour, six per cent gave negative views and the remainder said they “don't know”. Of those who voiced a clear opinion, the majority were in favour.

Positive views were sometimes accompanied by frustration that change had taken so long, and relief that problems like security and vermin would be tackled.

Negative concerns included a wish to refurbish rather than demolish and concerns about affordability and rehousing.

Those who did not give an opinion often voiced a lack of clarity about the regeneration plans, and a lack of knowledge about future plans for the estate.

The street interviews were unstructured and asked very open questions, allowing residents to set the agenda for discussions. If an issue was not mentioned by a resident, it was not pursued. Only a minority of interviewees - about 20 per cent - spontaneously raised the issues of regeneration. Of these, eight people were positive, six were negative and three neutral or ambivalent about the changes.

Several young people voiced particular concerns about the regeneration. Their central concern was what relocation would mean for their friendships and friendship groups. Young people do not have the freedoms or resources to stay in contact with friends if they move away, and they were fearful about what moving could mean. Their other apprehension was what this would mean for their education and school life. However, some young people welcomed the change to the grey appearance of their homes.

Focus groups and discussions also explored attitudes towards regeneration, and in these many residents articulated anxieties about whether the homes that were built through the regeneration would be “for them”. The most common sentiment voiced was a sense of inevitability, and overall support for demolition and rebuilding, given the conditions of the buildings. Residents who had seen inside the L&Q flats or Notting Hill Housing flats in other areas generally liked them (although some had reservations about the open plan layout).

**“I think it is long overdue. Now there is funding, they are improving the area”**

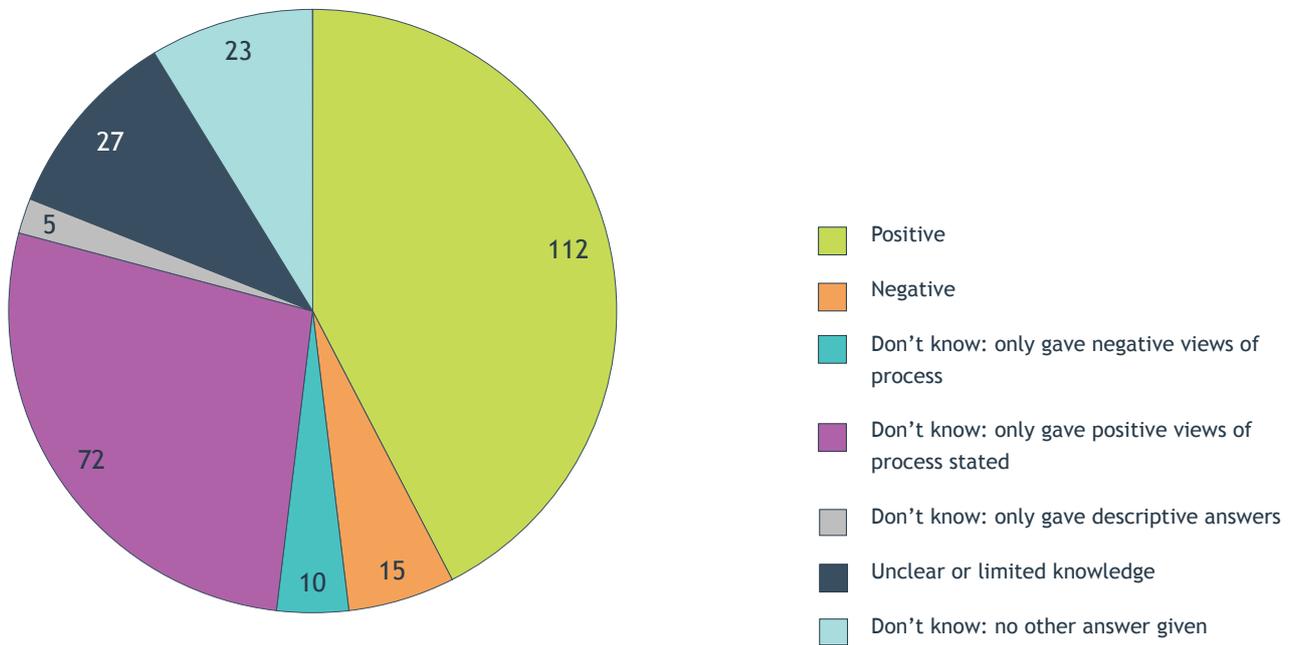
white British leaseholder, age 55-64, Foxcote

**“I think it's a waste of money, they should put the money into repairing and maintenance of the estate”**

Chinese council tenant, age 25 - 34, Wendover

**“We don't know what to expect when they start knocking the building down”**

black African council tenant, age 35 - 44, Calverton



**Figure 41: Residents' responses to "From what you know about the plans for regeneration of the estate, what do you think about them?"**  
 Number of responses = 264

## Footnotes

1. Saffron Woodcraft et al (2012), *Design for Social Sustainability*, London: Social Life
2. ibid
3. Nicola Bacon and Lucia Caistor Arendar (2014), *Measuring social sustainability in Sutton*, London: Social Life
4. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/census/index.html>
5. from ONS neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
6. Robin Pharoah, Oliver Hopwood (2013), *Families and hardship in New and Established Communities in Southwark*, London: Southwark Council
7. ONS/Neighbourhood statistics: GCSE and Equivalent result for young people - pupil residence
8. <http://data.london.gov.uk/documents/small-area-income-estimates-method-paper.pdf>
9. Personal tax credits: Children in low-income families measure: 2013 snapshot as at 31 August 2013 (HMRC)
10. see <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/> for more information
11. *Southwark Wellbeing Factsheet* (2014), London: Southwark Council

This report was prepared by Social Life.

Social Life was established in 2012 by The Young Foundation, and is now based in Elephant & Castle. All our work is about the relationship between people and places.

