



**OFFICE OF THE  
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Tenants  
Managing  
An Evaluation of  
Tenant Management  
Organisations in  
England

housing



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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

# Tenants Managing

## An Evaluation of Tenant Management Organisations in England

November 2002

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Oxford Brookes University in association with HACAS Chapman Hendy  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

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# Glossary

EMB	Estate Management Board – an incorporated resident managed body that has a management agreement that provides for a dedicated budget and staff to be seconded to carry out the functions delegated.
TMC	Tenant Management Co-operative – an incorporated resident managed body that has a management agreement that provides for allowances to be paid and staff employed to carry out the functions delegated.
TMO	Tenant Management Organisation – generic term for any developing or established EMB or TMC.
LSVT	Refers to the large-scale voluntary transfer of formerly council owned housing to a housing association or other registered social landlord.
MMA	Modular Management Agreement is the pro forma management agreement issued by ODPM which local authorities and tenant groups must use to describe which functions will be devolved.
Management & Maintenance Allowance	The amount payable by the local authority to the TMO to manage its estate. The amount is calculated by a formula according to the budget of the local neighbourhood office to carry out the same management and maintenance functions.
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: formerly DTLR (2001–2), prior to that, DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions). Functions include local government and housing matters.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord, usually refers to a housing association.
RtB	Right to Buy
RtM	Right to Manage established under the 1993 Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act gives council tenants (covering not less than 25 dwellings) the right to take over management functions from their local authority subject to meeting required levels of competence and a majority vote in favour.
Section 16 Agency	Training agency approved by the ODPM to support and train tenant groups through the Right to Manage process.
Section 16 Funding	Grants available under Section 16 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 empowering the ODPM to grant funding for the promotion and development of tenant participation.

SRB	Single Regeneration Budget – area based funding for physical, social and economic regeneration.
TMO Online	A net-based resource for TMOs in London and elsewhere to share information and good practice.

## Organisations

ATIC	Association of Tenants in Control
CCH	Confederation of Co-operative Housing
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
LACOG	Local Authority Co-operative Officers Group
Nat Fed	National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations
TAROE	Tenants and Residents Organisations England
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) are tenant-controlled organisations which provide a varying range of management and maintenance services to tenants under a Modular Management Agreement with their landlord. Many TMOs, especially the more established ones, undertake a range of activities over and above their housing role that contribute to the sustainability and empowerment of individuals and the communities in which they live.

In January 2001, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (then the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) commissioned Oxford Brookes University (in association with HACAS Chapman Hendy) to carry out an evaluation of TMOs.

The aim of the research was to evaluate TMOs in terms of their own objectives and their success in delivering effective and efficient housing management services. In addition, the researchers looked at issues of governance and accountability, sustainability and community empowerment. Recommendations for good practice emerged from the research findings.

The research used a variety of research methods to explore and evaluate the work of TMOs. There were five main stages to the study, involving a variety of methods. Initial stakeholder interviews were followed by a survey of English local authorities and a survey of established TMOs. In-depth case studies were carried out in 16 established TMOs, including one where the stock had been transferred to a housing association, and 2 TMOs in development. The case studies were selected to reflect a cross-section of TMOs in terms of size, location, type of authority, length of operation and range of responsibilities. They involved semi-structured interviews with TMO staff and board members, local authority staff and councillors, a survey of 480 residents and the collection of performance data. Regional research workshops took place to validate and feedback the initial findings to case studies and other participants. An additional workshop for key stakeholders was held in May 2002 to present and discuss the draft report.

### **OVERALL PICTURE ON TMOs**

There are 202 established TMOs across 53 local authorities and 81 TMOs in development, covering an estimated 84,000 homes. The majority (66%) of TMOs are in London, with most of the rest in the North West (18%) and the West Midlands (8%), mainly in metropolitan authorities. They range in size from 12 to 9,760 properties with an average size of a little over 400 homes.

More than three-quarters of TMOs are responsible for day to day repairs, void management, tenancy management and cleaning communal areas. More than half (53%) of TMOs wish to increase their responsibilities, mainly by either increasing the range of functions or the

number of properties covered. A few TMOs are looking at becoming registered social landlords and/or becoming involved in neighbourhood management.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

TMOs are providing an effective service in terms of their own aims and objectives. In most cases, they are doing better than their host local authorities and compare favourably with the top 25% of local authorities in England in terms of repairs, relets, rent collection and tenant satisfaction. This was supported by the views of board members and staff. However, recording of performance information is generally weak among TMOs (as it is for local authorities at the estate level). This limited the ability of the researchers to look at value for money.

The failure of local authorities to deliver an adequate level of service which led to the establishment of many TMOs, and the poor quality of the housing stock which some TMOs have taken over, makes their achievements in terms of performance all the more remarkable.

Most case study TMOs were able to generate surpluses through good financial management and voluntary effort. These were used mainly for environmental and security improvements. This contributed to the wider goal of creating sustainable communities. In addition, they provide residents with an opportunity to have more say and greater control over their environment.

## **GETTING STARTED**

More than half (55%) of tenant groups found out about TMOs from their local authority, and 21% from Section 16 agencies. The main reasons for setting up TMOs are a wish for more say (76%), dissatisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service (69%), poor housing management (51%) and the physical appearance of an estate (42%). In most cases, a combination of factors come into play, both push and pull. 65% of TMOs have been set up since the introduction of the Right to Manage in 1993.

TMOs and local authorities were generally satisfied with the process of developing the TMO, although some would have liked greater help with the selection of a training agency, and in developing staff management and employment skills. Some training agencies were thought to be promoting a standard management package that did not always meet the requirements and context of individual TMOs.

## **MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE**

Not all the 16 established TMOs in the case studies were able to provide performance data, and in some cases the TMO was not responsible for certain functions. The evaluation of performance is therefore based on low numbers but there is no reason to think the non-response is a source of bias. The following sections refer to the case study TMOs for which data is available and applicable. Data on tenant satisfaction is based on the residents' survey.

## **Repairs**

Most of the case study TMOs equalled or surpassed the top 25% of local authorities in 2001 in terms of the average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs, and the percentage of urgent repairs completed within government timescales. 69% of tenants were satisfied with the way the TMO carried out repairs and maintenance, compared with 59% of council tenants in the Survey of English Housing 2000/2001.

Many TMOs directly employ a handyman or repairs staff. This contributed to improving the quality and responsiveness of repairs, while also reducing costs in comparison with council contractors.

## **Lettings**

Most of the case study TMOs equalled or surpassed the top 25% of local authorities in 2001 in terms of the average time taken to relet a property. 45% of tenants thought that the speed of lettings had got better on their TMO.

The degree of control that TMOs have over lettings and allocations was very variable, from accepting local authority nominations to operating a local allocations policy. Allocations were frequently an area of controversy. Many TMOs would like more say in order to strengthen the sustainability of the estate and the TMO, while local authorities feel that TMOs are reluctant to take homeless applicants and “difficult” tenants.

## **Voids**

Some TMOs have been able to reduce voids, partly through improving the appeal of their estate, partly by changes such as using net curtains rather than sited. However, reduced demand for social housing in certain parts of the country means that some TMOs are finding it difficult to let properties.

## **Rent collection**

Relatively few TMOs undertake rent collection and TMOs are widely viewed as “soft” in this area. In fact, all of the case study TMOs with responsibility for rent collection were doing as well as the top 25% of local authorities in 2001 in terms of the percentage of rent collected. Some TMOs were involved in credit unions as part of a preventive approach to rent arrears.

## **Tenancy management**

Contrary to the views of some observers, TMOs are not a “soft touch” on tenancy management either. Case study TMOs followed their local authority policy and procedures, but tended to act sooner and have the advantage/disadvantage of personal knowledge. Some combine a robust and assertive stand on anti-social behaviour with preventive work, concentrating on providing activities for young people.

## **Grounds maintenance and cleaning**

Grounds maintenance was generally of a high standard, and improvements in the appearance of an estate were one of the main achievements identified by TMOs. 45% of tenants said that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better, compared with 10% who thought it had got worse. 48% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better compared with 11% who thought it had got worse.

### **Tenant satisfaction**

77% of TMO tenants were satisfied with their TMO overall compared with 67% of council tenants in the Survey of English Housing (2000/01). Ballots of TMO residents held every 5 years on whether or not continue as a TMO also reflect high levels of resident satisfaction within TMOs. Levels of complaints were low, although this is an area where formal recording procedures were weak.

Satisfaction among black and minority ethnic residents was particularly high: 81% were satisfied with the TMO overall compared with 51% of 'non-white' social sector tenants in the Survey of English Housing 2000/2001.

## **SECURITY**

Most case study TMOs have taken steps to combat crime, such as the installation of CCTV, extra lighting and security doors. A number have turned their estates round from no-go areas into safe places to live. Over and above practical measures, some felt that by creating more cohesive and responsible communities, they have reduced the opportunity for crime.

## **TMOs AS ORGANISATIONS**

### **Governance and accountability**

Nearly a quarter (24%) of residents have attended a TMO meeting. However, few residents put themselves forward as committee members and elections are rarely contested. AGMs are often poorly attended and sometimes inquorate.

Practice about whether or not meetings are open or closed varied. Some TMO boards are reluctant to have open management meetings while others allow any resident to come and observe and raise issues.

### **Sustainability**

In spite of the difficulties experienced by TMOs in recruiting active board members, there was general confidence in the future. There are few examples of established TMOs that have folded.

However, the departure of one key worker or board member may affect the sustainability of a TMO. Greater use of co-option may be one way to strengthen representation from hard-to-reach groups and bring new skills and expertise onto TMO boards.

### **Staffing**

Most TMOs (85%) employ their own staff in a local office. Generally, staff turnover is low and there are good relationships between staff and board members in case studies. Staff-board relationships are critical to the effective functioning of TMOs.

Some staff are attracted to work for TMOs because of the greater independence and variety offered, while others see working for a TMO as insecure with poor career prospects. Some management and maintenance staff commented on the high levels of satisfaction of working for a small TMO: the friendliness, lack of bureaucracy, and increased motivation because of the direct relationship with residents.

### **Openness, diversity and inclusiveness**

All TMO case studies had some form of equal opportunities policy although many do not appear aware of the CRE's Code of Practice for Rented Housing. In all cases, all new tenants were told about the TMO and invited to join.

Women and black and minority ethnic groups are better represented on the boards of TMOs than on local authorities. More than three-quarters of tenants agreed that their TMO was representative of the people who live there, and that 'the TMO treats all types of people fairly'. More than 80% of black and minority ethnic respondents agreed with these statements.

### **Tenant information and participation**

Most of the case studies have newsletters, although often sporadic. Some have notice-boards where details of meetings and other information is publicised.

77% of TMO tenants compared with 49% of council tenants in the Survey of English Housing were satisfied with the opportunities to be involved in the management of their homes.

### **Training**

In most of the case study TMOs, funding for ongoing training, or for new members, does not seem to be much of a priority post-development and there was general vagueness over budgets. TMOs receive £20 per property for committee costs but some use it as part of their general repairs budget. For small TMOs, this sum is inadequate to meet training needs.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Many TMOs have taken on a wider role, beyond the limits of the Modular Management Agreement, in terms of social activities and community development. However, there is often an overlap between a TMO and the local tenants and residents association that makes it difficult to be clear what is attributable to the TMO.

TMOs are acting as a focus for other community and regeneration initiatives, providing a resource at the estate level where local residents can promote and often base other projects and activities, while providing a contact point for outside agencies wishing to make links with the local community.

The development of community spirit was widely identified by TMOs as one of their main achievements, and the majority of residents felt the TMO had made a difference. 77% agreed that the TMO played an important part in improving the quality of life in the area.

Generally, TMO board members reported increased confidence and skills, although few said that they had gone on to further education, training or employment as a result of their TMO membership.

Board members felt positive about the experience of being involved in their TMO, but all emphasised the hard work, and sometimes thankless, nature of it. The average time input of office holders was 13 hours a week in case study TMOs.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR TMOS**

The role of local authorities is important in contributing to the success and sustainability of TMOs, yet the relationship with local authorities is often problematic. While TMO relationships with tenant participation staff were usually good, there was frequent frustration with other council staff.

Common sources of disagreement included: allocations, the level of allowances, the division of repair responsibilities, lack of liaison or understanding of the TMO's role, and lack of commitment among some local authority staff and members.

The main barriers to increasing the extent and effectiveness of tenant management are:

- lack of knowledge of the tenant management option;
- poor networking and sharing of information between TMOs;
- a dwindling pool of potential activists;
- disinterested or hostile local authorities; and
- uncertainty over the consequences of large-scale voluntary transfer.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

TMOs are a diverse, but flourishing sector. The majority of case studies were performing well in terms of housing management and their own objectives. Most staff and board members were confident that they represented value for money. They are generally well-run organisations, and a number have gone considerably beyond their original remit to develop community and social activities and facilities for their residents.

TMOs provide a model of what can be achieved by local people in socially excluded communities where training and support is available. They strengthen the case for the development and support of community based organisations with control over the provision and management of local services. TMOs also provide useful, transferable examples of good practice in developing community empowerment and control. The strengths of TMOs have proved difficult to capture, but the research has shown no cause to doubt the value of TMOs, and many good reasons to promote them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The key recommendations of the study are:

### *Getting started*

- Guidance should be provided to tenants' groups on how to choose a training agency.
- More formal monitoring of the quality of training provided by training agencies is needed.

- Other competencies that could usefully be included in the development process are: employment and personnel, managing contracts and contractors, and health and safety.
- Greater involvement of council staff and members in training during the development stage could help to build better relationships and understanding on all sides.

#### *Management effectiveness*

- Advice and support in making improvements to recording of performance information by TMOs are needed. Performance information requirements should be limited to a small number of indicators.
- The CRE Code of Practice for Rented Housing should be more widely promoted.
- Greater flexibility in allocations should be considered, providing housing need criteria are met.
- TMOs should be involved in discussions about major works spending and have equitable access to capital funding.
- TMOs and local authorities should ensure that Modular Management Agreements state clearly the division of responsibilities between TMO and local authority.
- TMOs and local authorities need clear guidance on what is an acceptable level of reserves for TMOs to accumulate.
- TMOs need to ensure that they formally record complaints, and how they are dealt with.
- Staff should have equivalent conditions of employment to their local authority counterparts – rates of pay, leave entitlements, and pension rights.

#### *TMOs as organisations*

- The £20 per property budget for committee costs should be used for committee training, conferences etc.
- A minimum budget for committee costs should be established, so that small TMOs receive adequate funding for training.
- TMO meetings should be open and non-members encouraged to attend. Part of the agenda may be closed, if necessary, for the discussion of confidential business.
- TMOs should adopt a code of conduct for committee members setting out expected behaviour and practice and the mechanisms for resolving conflict.
- TMOs should consider greater use of co-option to strengthen committees and widen representation.
- Where there are a large number of seats on a TMO board and places remain unfilled, the size of the board should be reviewed and a reduction in size considered.

- Guidelines setting out the relationship of the board to staff in terms of behaviour and practice are needed.

*TMO/Local authority relations*

- Local authorities should offer TMOs assistance with payroll, personnel, IT and legal matters.
- Local authorities should include TMO estates in their tenant satisfaction surveys for best value to enable the collection of comparative data.
- Local authorities should ensure that all TMOs have a clearly designated liaison officer in the council whose role includes ensuring that local authority staff are briefed on the TMO.

*The future*

- Many TMOs operate in relative isolation from each other and opportunities for networking and sharing good practice should be promoted, for example, through the National Federation of TMOs and TMO-Online.
- Clear guidance to protect the position of existing TMOs and the Right to Manage for tenants undergoing LSVT is needed from the ODPM and the Housing Corporation.
- A knowledge of tenant management should form an integral part of housing courses.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

- 1.01 The government set out its vision for widening tenant empowerment, improving the quality and efficiency of housing management, and giving tenants more choice in *Housing: Quality and Choice* (2000). Tenant management organisations have since been promoted as a means to achieving these various ends. They represent one of the most important developments in tenant empowerment in recent years, and offer some important lessons for those concerned with implementing the current policy agenda of best value, tenant compacts, the New Deal, for Communities, neighbourhood management and area-based regeneration. Tenant management organisations (TMOs) may provide valuable examples of good practice for those working elsewhere to tackle social exclusion and empower individuals and communities in poor neighbourhoods. They may also serve as useful models for tenant involvement at board level in arms-length management companies.

### What is a TMO?

- 1.02 The term tenant management organisation encompasses both tenant management co-operatives and estate management boards. Since the Housing (Rents and Subsidies) Act in 1975, local authorities have been able to delegate budgets and responsibility for housing management and maintenance to tenant management organisations. Section 16 of the 1986 Housing and Planning Act provided powers for the funding of advice and support to tenant groups. These grants have been used for feasibility studies and the development of TMOs.
- 1.03 Until 1987, there was only one type of TMO, the tenant management co-operative (TMC). TMC boards are usually composed entirely of residents and directly employ their own staff. The estate management board model (EMB) was developed by the Priority Estates Project in the 1980s, coinciding with the introduction of Estate Action which aimed to revitalise run-down estates. EMBs are run by a board with a resident majority, but may also include councillors and officers. Staff are usually seconded from the local authority. Like TMCs, they are either registered as industrial and provident societies or as companies limited by guarantee. There is no legal distinction between the two forms of TMO.
- 1.04 In both kinds of TMO, the landlord retains ownership and enters into a management agreement with the TMO, setting out the functional and geographical areas for which the TMO has responsibility. In practice, the difference between the two types of TMO is blurred.
- 1.05 The introduction of the Right to Manage in April 1994 under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 gave all tenants' groups covering 25 or more

properties the right to take on a range of housing management and maintenance responsibilities. After serving a Right to Manage notice, the feasibility stage begins with training of the tenants group and a test of opinion to ensure there is sufficient support to proceed to the development stage. This usually lasts between 18 and 24 months and is when the Modular Management Agreement (MMA) is negotiated and the Management and Maintenance Allowances agreed. This is followed by a ballot which if successful leads to the establishment of the TMO. Responsibility for some or all of the day to day management and maintenance passes to the TMO board. The TMO and local authority are supposed to sign the MMA which is legally binding. Once established, tenants vote every five years on whether or not the TMO should continue. A review of the MMA and associated guidance is being conducted by the ODPM in 2002.

- 1.06 There are now more than 200 TMOs covering an estimated 84,000 homes. Although they cover less than 3% of the total council stock in England (Survey of English Housing 2000/1), they have throughout their history attracted a disproportionate amount of interest as examples of tenant participation and control. Nationally, there has been all-party support for TMOs, which has not always existed at the local level. Some local authorities have actively promoted TMOs, while others have taken a passive approach.
- 1.07 Since the publication of *Tenants in Control* in 1995, there has been little research on, or evaluation of, the development and operation of tenant management organisations (TMOs). In 1995, Price Waterhouse concluded that tenant management co-operatives were 'very effective mechanisms for securing improved housing services, higher levels of tenant satisfaction and more economical running costs' while estate management boards have demonstrated that they can deliver 'a tenant-oriented service...in the most difficult operational contexts' (Price Waterhouse, 1995, p.120).
- 1.08 The current research is the first evaluation since the introduction of the Right to Manage and the availability of government funding to support the feasibility and development stage of TMOs. It has provided an opportunity to update *Tenants in Control* in the light of a changed national and local context, and to provide a more comprehensive evaluation with a larger number of case studies and a broader range of evaluation criteria.

## Aims of the research

- 1.09 The main aims of the study can be summarised as follows:
  - to evaluate TMOs in terms of their own objectives, and their success in delivering efficient and effective housing management services;
  - to explore issues of governance, accountability and sustainability;
  - to identify problems and barriers to success;
  - to produce robust information on the costs and benefits of TMOs;
  - to highlight lessons for wider community empowerment;

- to make recommendations on good practice for TMOs, local authorities, central government and other interested parties.

1.10 The report looks at TMOs in relation to the running of estates and questions of housing management, but also wider issues of empowerment and sustainable communities. In the light of the policy concerns raised by the reports of the Policy Action Team (PAT 4, 2000; PAT 5, 2000; PAT 9, 2000; PAT 17, 2000a), the research looks at what TMOs have to offer.

1.11 Since 1995, there have been a number of policy developments and trends in social housing which have a bearing on the development and success of TMOs. A new set of questions about TMOs emerge from this altered context:

- LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER

1.12 125 local authorities have now transferred all or part of their stock to a registered social landlord (as at 31.3.02, ODPM website). The majority of these have been rural authorities, but an increasing number of transfers have taken place in urban areas with concentrations of social housing. There is no statutory provision for the transfer of the Right to Manage where such transfers take place and there has been growing concern in some areas about the consequences of transfer on established TMOs. *What are the implications of LSVT for tenant management?*

- TENANT COMPACTS AND BEST VALUE IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1.13 Since April 2000, local authorities have had a duty of best value which obliges them to deliver services to clear standards of cost and quality by the most efficient and effective means available. As part of best value, local authorities have implemented tenant participation compacts with their tenants, which set out how tenants will be consulted and involved in housing decisions. These initiatives aim to raise the quality and responsiveness of council housing services. *Where quality and participation have improved in council services, how has this affected established TMOs and those contemplating options such as the Right to Manage?*

- A TREND OF ABANDONMENT OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

1.14 Early TMOs noted with pride their success in tackling unpopular estates and attracting tenants into areas where there had previously been high levels of voids. The growing problem of abandonment in certain parts of the country has implications for the viability of social housing in general. *Will this trend undermine previous progress in reducing voids and relet times in TMOs?*

- THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SOCIAL HOUSING

1.15 Social exclusion has emerged as a growing problem in social housing and council tenants have become an increasingly marginalised group, with high levels of dependence on benefits and unemployment. Two trends: the increasingly elderly profile of council tenants; and the growth of lettings to homeless households may have consequences for the sustainability of tenant activity in general and TMOs in particular. *Is the growth of social exclusion resulting in a decline in the potential pool of tenants with the skills, experience and commitment needed to take an active part on TMO boards?*

- THE REVERSAL OF THE TREND TOWARDS DECENTRALISED HOUSING MANAGEMENT

1.16 Many local authorities have reversed decentralised housing management initiatives introduced in the 1980s and early 90s. *Are more recently established TMOs a response to this trend and a means of recovering a local estate-based presence?*

- GROWTH OF RIGHT TO BUY

1.17 On some estates, particularly in London, a high proportion of homes have been sold under the Right to Buy. This has an impact on management allowances for TMOs. *What have been the other consequences? Are property owners more or less likely to become involved in TMOs? Are there conflicts of interest between tenants and those who have exercised the Right to Buy? What happens when Right to Buy properties are let or sold on to others with no previous connection with the estate?*

1.18 The study explores the relationship of these trends and initiatives to TMOs and attempts to answer the questions which they raise.

1.19 The research was commissioned alongside the ODPM review of the Modular Management Agreement. The findings from this study have contributed to that review.

1.20 The research was conducted in five stages during 2001 and early 2002, beginning with initial scoping interviews with key stakeholders, the development of criteria and indicators for evaluation. A national postal survey of local authorities in England was then carried out to develop a database of established and developing TMOs. The third stage was a national postal survey of established TMOs to build up a profile in terms of their size, age, management responsibilities, non-housing activities, structure, and achievements. The fourth stage involved eighteen case studies in a cross-section of TMOs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with activists, TMO staff and local authority members and staff alongside the collection of performance data. In addition, a survey of residents across the case studies enabled the collection of data on satisfaction and other data for triangulation with the other data from the case studies. Finally, three regional research workshops were held with representatives from the case studies, TMO and local authority survey respondents, and the ODPM to validate the emerging findings and provide an opportunity for early dissemination.

1.21 The report begins with the results from the surveys of local authorities and TMOs in Chapter 2. A presentation of the evaluation criteria is set out in Chapter 3. A synthesis of the findings from the case studies is presented in Chapter 4 under the headings covered by the evaluation criteria. Additional points to emerge such as issues around the effect of the Right to Buy are also discussed. The conclusions are contained in Chapter 5 followed by the recommendations for good practice in Chapter 6. Details of the research methodology are set out in Appendix I and a case study grid and case study profiles are in Appendices II and III. Appendix IV contains a list of the stakeholder interviewees and Appendix V a note on the resident survey method.

## CHAPTER 2

# An overview of Tenant Management Organisations

## Introduction

- 2.01 Two postal surveys were carried out as part of the research: first a survey of local authorities was conducted in Spring 2001 to identify some preliminary information on the extent and characteristics of established and developing TMOs. Following on from the survey of local authorities and the findings from interviews with a number of key stakeholders, a postal survey of established TMOs was conducted to explore key issues in more detail in May and June 2001. These included their reasons for setting up as TMOs, current responsibilities and activities, and future plans, performance information, board membership, achievements and barriers to success. The results of the two surveys are presented jointly in this chapter.

## Local authority survey

- 2.02 A total of 233 questionnaires were returned by local authorities, giving a 66% response rate from the 354 English local authorities. Forty-seven of the non-respondents were large-scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) authorities. Given the largely rural profile of stock transfer authorities and the apparent concentration of TMOs in urban areas, it is unlikely that many stock transfer authorities have TMOs operating within their area, and they will probably not themselves be employing any specialist staff to support tenant management. The response may be skewed towards local authorities with council stock, and in particular, to local authorities with TMOs. Particular efforts were made to contact non-responding authorities known or believed to have TMOs.
- 2.03 Altogether a total of 202 established TMOs were identified. The figure is in a constant state of flux as more TMOs are continuing to be established and occasionally others are wound up.

## TMO survey

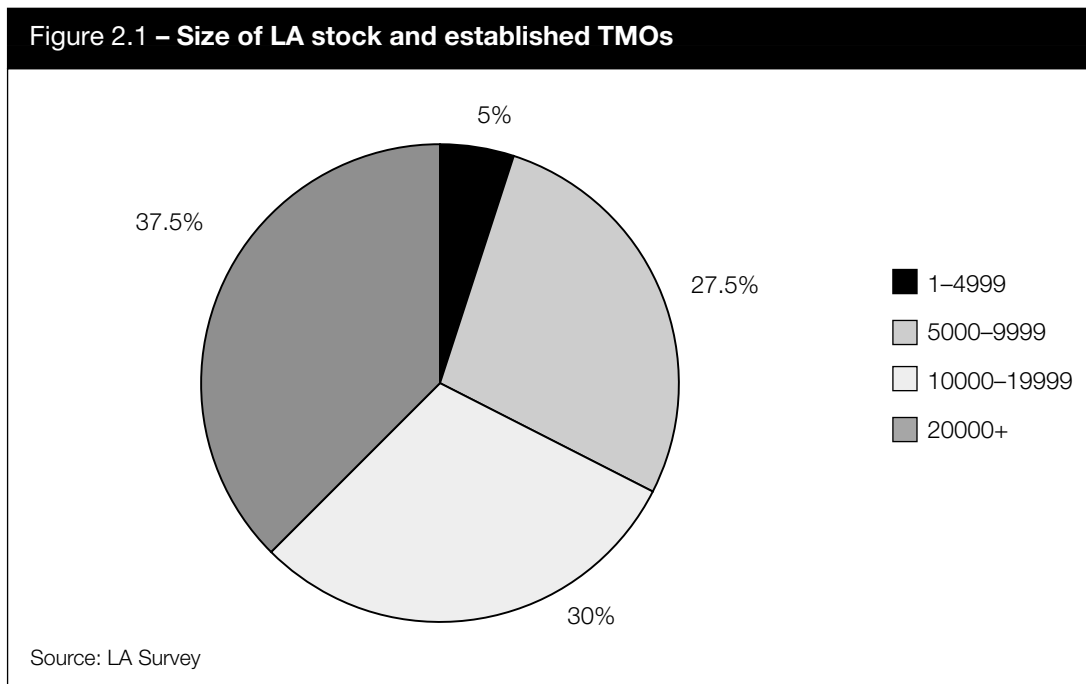
- 2.04 A total of 100 questionnaires were returned from established TMOs, yielding a response rate just below 50%. Some additional information on individual TMOs was available from data in the local authority questionnaire, stakeholder interviews and the ODPM's database. The majority of responses were from TMOs in London boroughs, followed by metropolitan authorities and then districts. The pattern of response was similar to the known distribution

of TMOs as reported in the local authority survey, (see Table 2.1) although response rates appear to have been lowest in London.

<b>Table 2.1 – Type of authority by TMO survey response and actual distribution of established and developing TMOs</b>			
	<b>TMO survey response N=100</b>	<b>Actual distribution of TMOs N=202</b>	<b>Distribution of TMOs in development N= 81</b>
London borough	62%	66%	58%
Met. Borough	25%	21%	27%
District council	9%	10%	14%
LSVT	4%	3%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%
Source: LA & TMO surveys & ODPM database			

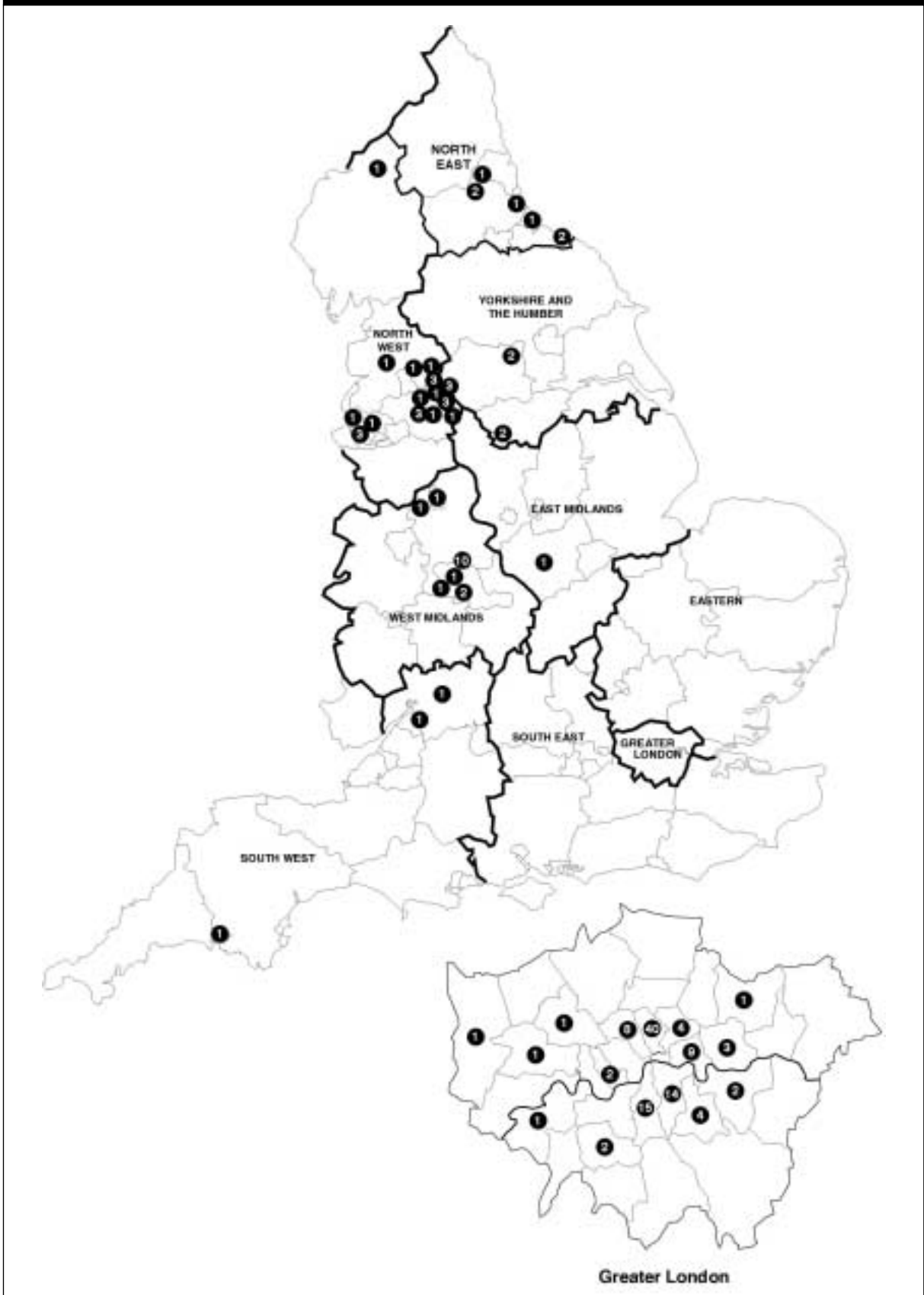
## Distribution of TMOs

- 2.05 A strong London bias to the distribution of established TMOs emerges from the local authority survey and the ODPM’s own database: 66% of all established TMOs are in London boroughs, 21% in metropolitan authorities, 10% in districts and 3% in LSVT associations (see Table 2.1). Five London boroughs have more than 10 established TMOs in operation, with Islington topping the league table with 34 established TMOs, followed by Lambeth (15), Westminster (15), Southwark (14), Wandsworth (13), and then Camden (9), and Tower Hamlets (7).
- 2.06 Regionally, TMOs appear to be concentrated along a corridor from London (66%) through the West Midlands (8%) to the North West of England (18%). No TMOs were identified in the East or South East regions outside of London (see Figure 2.2). This regional concentration follows a historic trend: in *Training for Tenant Management* (DoE, 1994), 62% of TMOs were in London, 11% in the West Midlands and 14% in the North West. Comparing the spread with data on tenant participation activity (Cole et al, 2000) reveals a marked correspondence of regions with a high level of tenant participation activity and high numbers of TMOs.
- 2.07 There is also a relationship between the size of authorities’ housing stock and whether or not they have established TMOs (see Figure 2.1). Larger authorities are more likely to have established TMOs. More than half (54%) of authorities with 20,000 or more council homes have a TMO. This parallels findings on the relationship between size of stock and tenant participation (Cairncross et al, 1990).



- 2.08 A majority (77%) of local authorities report no TMOs established in their area. These tend to be smaller, rural authorities. LSVT authorities and those without specialist tenant management staff were also less likely to have established TMOs.
- 2.09 TMOs are thus concentrated in large, urban authorities. Various factors may explain this. The nature of the stock and the existence of successful local role models in the form of other TMOs appear to play a part. A scattered, dispersed stock for example, is unlikely to provide a sufficient concentration of activists to get a TMO established. In addition, the results of the
- 2.10 TMO survey indicate the importance of the role of local authorities in informing tenants of TMOs and also a significant part played by Section 16 agencies. Sympathetic and encouraging local authorities, and locally based promotional agencies may play an important role in the establishment of TMOs. The availability of Estate Action funding influenced the development of some early TMOs (Price Waterhouse, 1995), but this does not explain the location of more recently established TMOs.
- 2.11 Although dissatisfaction with levels of service was frequently cited as a reason for the setting up of a TMO, they do not appear to be concentrated in local authorities where performance is in the lowest quartile in best value assessments (Audit Commission, 2000). This apparent contradiction may reflect real intra-authority differences in performance or, alternatively, differing perceptions among TMO residents of the services they receive.

Figure 2.2 – Distribution of TMOs in England



## Developing TMOs

- 2.12 A total of 81 TMOs in development were identified through the local authority survey (see Table 2.1); in most cases only one or two TMOs were in development within the authority, although one authority had ten in development. As with the total for established TMOs, this is a fluid figure which will change as new groups form and other ones proceed to TMO status or decide not to opt for tenant management.

## Local authorities and TMOs

- 2.13 A total of 53 authorities (23% of all local authorities in England) have established TMOs. Some authorities reported unsuccessful attempts to get TMOs established, and others gave examples of options studies and other initiatives that reflected efforts on their part to stimulate an interest in a variety of forms of tenant participation or control among tenants.
- 2.14 The concentration of TMOs in London is confirmed by the finding that more than four-fifths (81%) of London boroughs responding to the questionnaire and more than half (56%) of metropolitan authorities have established TMOs while only 11% of districts and 2% of LSVT authorities have established TMOs.

## TMOs in LSVT associations

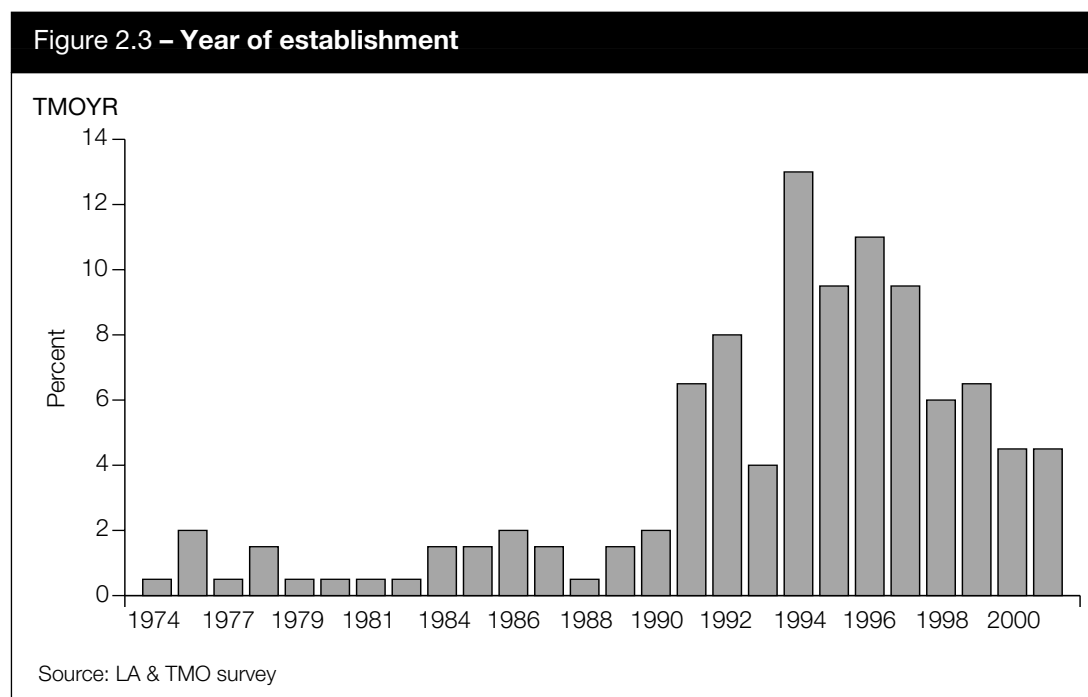
- 2.15 Seven TMOs were identified in large-scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) housing associations. This does not include the proposed transfer of most of the established TMOs in Walsall (and those currently in development) to a specially created transfer association: WATMOS, which will be composed exclusively of TMOs. If stock transfer continues at its present rate, it is likely that the number of TMOs transferred to LSVT housing associations will increase considerably over the coming years. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

## Types of TMO

- 2.16 The majority of TMOs identified were tenant management co-operatives (53%); 30% were estate management boards and 17% were classified as 'other', most describing themselves simply as TMOs. The type of TMO continues to be linked to size: larger TMOs are more likely to be EMBs, while smaller ones are more likely to be TMCs. Seventy per cent of TMOs with 500 or more properties are Estate Management Boards. EMBs in the survey ranged from 65 to 3,400 properties with a mean of 663 dwellings, while TMCs ranged from 12 to 1,448 units with a mean of 204. In *Training for Tenant Management* (DoE, 1994) the average size of EMBs was 966 compared with 156 for TMCs. This reflects the original development of the EMB as a model for tenant management on larger estates (Bell, 1991).

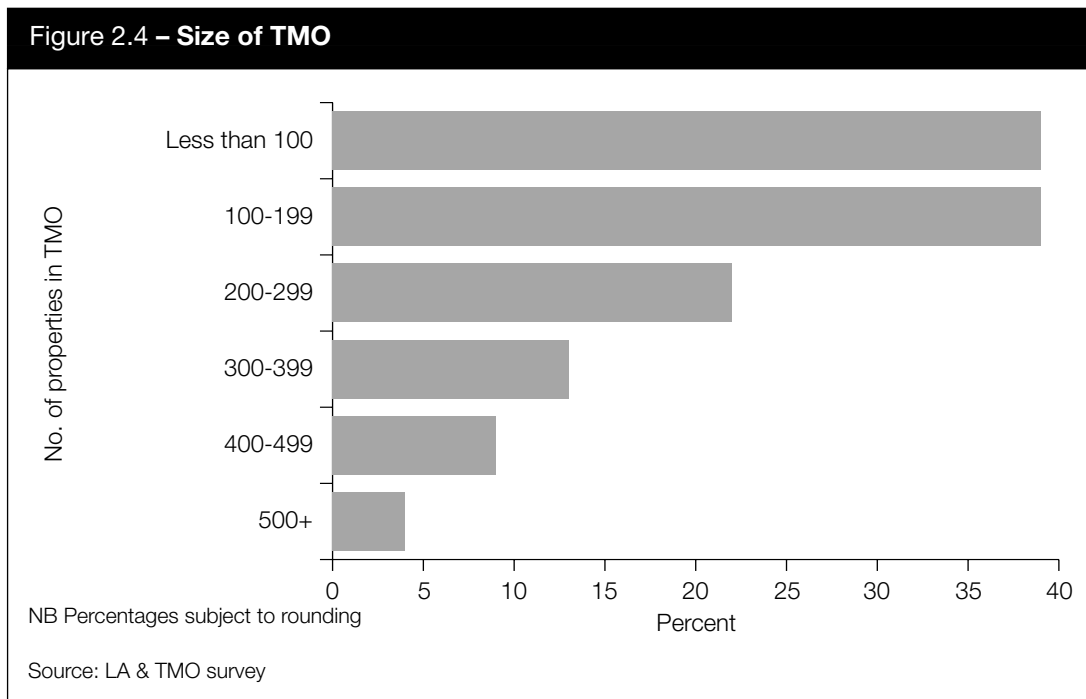
## Change over time

- 2.17 The number of TMOs is growing. The researchers identified 202 established TMOs. This compares with 81 TMOs in 1994 (DoE, 1994), around 100 in 1995 (Price Waterhouse, 1995) and 169 established TMOs in local authority housing by the beginning of 1998 (Tunstall, 2001).
- 2.18 The earliest responding TMO was established in 1974. The great majority of TMOs were set up in the 1990s (see Figure 2.3) and 65% since the introduction of the Right to Manage. There was a big increase in the numbers established in 1994; however in the last four years, the numbers being established appear to be back to the levels of the early 90s. A number of pre-RtM TMOs are now going through the Right to Manage process.



## Size

- 2.19 The size of TMOs varies enormously from 12 properties in one instance to Kensington and Chelsea with 9,760. Kensington and Chelsea is considerably larger than the next largest (3,400). Nearly one quarter (24%) have 500 properties or more (see Figure 2.4). The mean size of TMOs is a little over 400 properties.



## Type of housing

- 2.20 Most TMOs (59%) cover houses, low-rise flats (up to 4 storeys) and maisonettes. Sixteen per cent of TMOs cover high-rise blocks.

## Local office

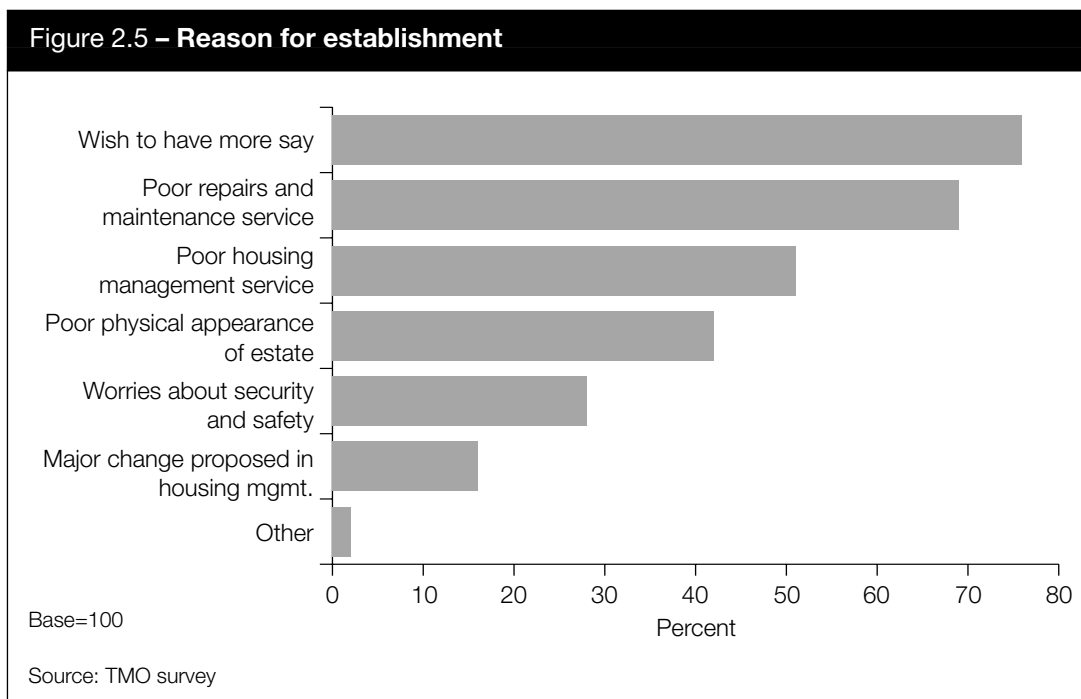
- 2.21 The great majority of TMOs have a local housing office (97%). In some cases this was highlighted as one of the TMOs' main achievements. From interviews, it is clear that some TMOs are seeking to revive a management presence on their estate which has been withdrawn by the landlord.

## How groups found out about TMOs

- 2.22 More than half (55%) of groups found out about TMOs from their local authority; 21% from Section 16 agencies; and 18% found out from other TMOs. This indicates an important role for landlord organisations in promoting TMOs and also the apparent existence of a "demonstration effect", whereby successful TMOs may inspire other groups to follow in their footsteps. Other sources of information included conferences, newspaper articles, and in one case, the Anglican Board for Social Responsibility.

## Reasons for establishment

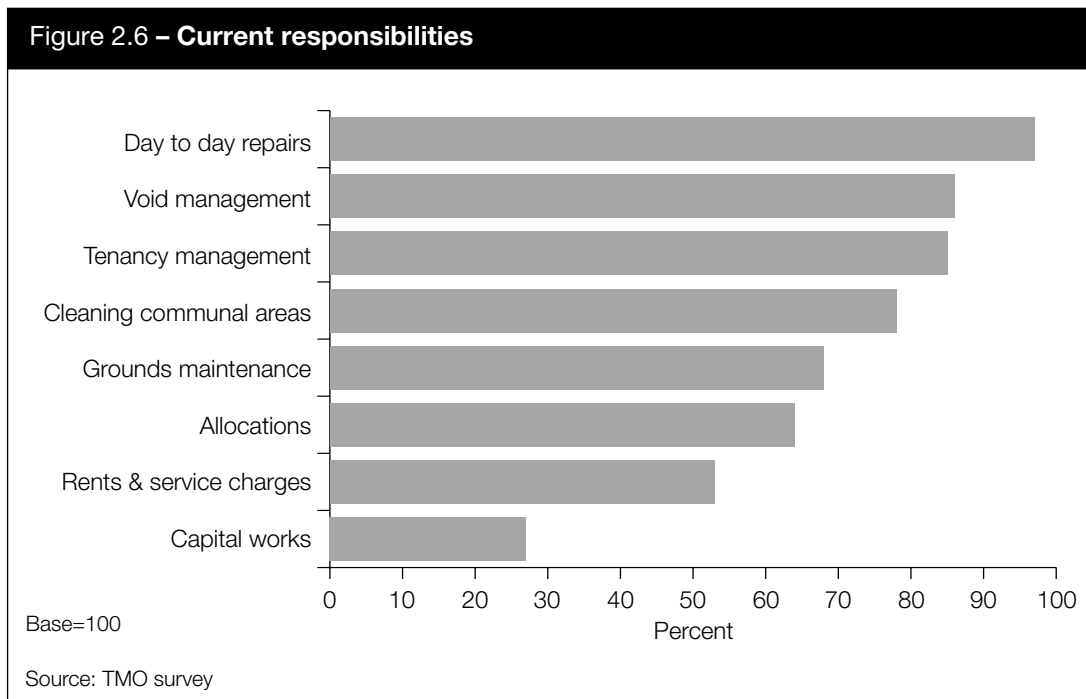
- 2.23 The most frequently mentioned reason for setting up a TMO was a wish for more say (76%), followed by a poor repairs and maintenance service (69%), poor housing management (51%) and the poor physical appearance of the estate (42%) (see Figure 2.5).



- 2.24 In most instances, a combination of factors was cited as the trigger for establishing tenant management. Only 2% mentioned Estate Action, although this was reported by some observers as an important factor in the establishment of early TMOs.

## Day to day responsibilities

- 2.25 The great majority of responding TMOs were responsible for day to day repairs (97%), void management (86%) and tenancy management (85%). Few had responsibility for capital works (27%) and in a number of cases, this was limited up to a certain amount. Although more than half (53%) were responsible for rent collection, this did not always include service charge collection too; and sometimes also excluded arrears collection (see Figure 2.6). Older TMOs established in the 1970s and 1980s were more likely than others to have taken on rent and service charge responsibilities and capital works.



- 2.26 Other responsibilities ranged from security and tenant training, to managing a shopping precinct and liaison with English Heritage over historic properties within the TMO.
- 2.27 Some of the stakeholders interviewed identified a split between TMOs confined to blue collar responsibilities (i.e. repairs, cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance) and those taking on the full range of responsibilities. Such a split seems less clear from the survey data, although responsibility for rents and capital works may represent some kind of distinct type.

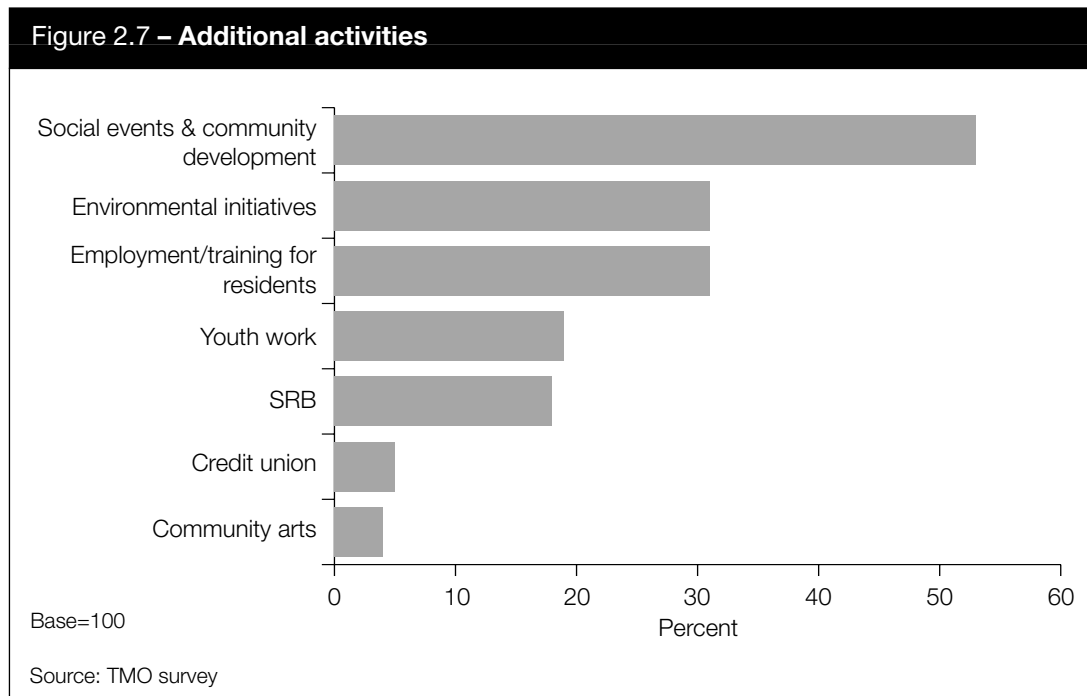
## Changes to responsibilities

- 2.28 More than half (53%) of respondents said that their TMO had plans to increase their responsibilities. Plans to increase responsibilities were not associated with the age of the TMO. The main areas mentioned were an increase in the number of properties managed or taking on more functional responsibilities, in particular major works. Three TMOs were looking at more major changes, such as becoming a RSL or taking on neighbourhood management.

## Additional non-housing activities

- 2.29 A significant majority of TMOs (67%) took part in additional activities, outside the Modular Management Agreement. They present a picture of dynamic communities tackling problems of social exclusion and economic decline.
- 2.30 More than half (53%) mentioned social events and community development activity; 31% cited environmental initiatives and employment/training for residents. Involvement in

Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) projects and youth work were also frequently mentioned (see Figure 2.7). From the case studies and stakeholder interviews, it is clear that the survey data under-represented the extent of activities undertaken by TMOs outside of the Modular Management Agreement. Social, community and environmental activities revealed in the case study interviews were not always mentioned in the original survey response.



2.31 The bare data do not do justice to the rich seam of talent and activity revealed in the responses. They indicate the way in which some TMOs can contribute to objectives wider than improvements in housing management, by providing a focus for community development.

## Staffing

2.32 A substantial majority (85%) of responding TMOs employed staff. More than three-quarters (82%) directly employed housing management staff, while 24% seconded housing management staff from the local authority. A couple of TMOs had sub-contracted housing management; in at least one case to an RSL. Most TMOs (67%) employed or seconded no more than 5 housing management staff. The small numbers of staff inevitably have implications for staff sickness or absence. Additionally, appropriate staff selection and recruitment is likely to take on greater importance than in larger organisations.

2.33 Forty-four per cent of the respondents employed a caretaker and 32% a cleaner. Nearly a quarter (22%) employed a repairs worker or handyperson, an important element in delivering a more localised, estate-based service. Such staff often had a variety of roles combining minor repairs with some caretaking or other responsibilities. This flexibility is something where TMOs appear to have an advantage over many councils. Many area-based repairs teams in local authorities have been disbanded or spread over larger areas since the 1980s (Power and Tunstall, 1995).

- 2.34 Other staff employed included: youth and community workers, gardeners and advice/welfare benefits staff.

## Board membership

- 2.35 Most TMO boards were composed of 8 to 12 members (60%). However, the full range was from 6 to 30. In comparison, housing association committees of management ranged from 5 to 29 in 1995. Most had between 11 and 15 members (Kearns, 1995, p.5).
- 2.36 The survey indicates that TMOs are more successful in involving women and black and minority ethnic residents than local government. Half (52%) of the TMOs responding had one or more black and minority ethnic (BME) member, and 25% had 3 or more BME members on the board. In comparison, a survey of local authority councillors found only 3% were from ethnic minorities (LGMB, 1998).
- 2.37 Most TMO boards have a majority of women members (54%). Men are in the majority in less than one-third of the boards (29%). This compares strikingly with female representation in local government where around one-quarter of councillors are women (SCPR,1998; Cmnd 4014), while a national survey of volunteers (Davis Smith, 1997) found men and women equally likely to volunteer. TMOs appear to be unusual in their ability to attract women volunteers and this may be because of their very local focus.
- 2.38 Although findings from the case studies indicated that the most active members were often elderly, most boards appear to have a reasonable mix of older and younger residents. Five per cent of TMOs had board members under 20, compared with 78% of TMOs with members aged 20-39, 94% with members aged 40-59, and 87% with members aged 60 plus. Only 2 TMO boards were composed exclusively of members aged 60 or above, and in less than a quarter of cases (23%) boards had a majority of tenants aged 60 or above. It is not known to what extent membership reflects the age profile of residents in the TMO area. The average age for local authority councillors is 56 (Cmnd 4014), while the 1997 survey of volunteering (Davis Smith, 1997) found the peak age range for volunteers was between 45 and 54, with increasing numbers of retired people volunteering. A more recent Home Office Citizenship survey quoted in the *The Guardian* (30.1.02) similarly found volunteering peaked at age 49. Older people were more likely to be involved in working for local community or neighbourhood groups.
- 2.39 The greater involvement of older residents in TMOs as office holders reflects a pattern in volunteering in general. They tend to have more time to devote to the TMO, and are therefore better placed to take on the more time-consuming roles on the TMO board.

## Leaseholders and freeholders

- 2.40 Most boards had a majority of tenants as members, however one responding TMO appeared to be composed exclusively of leaseholders. In just over one-fifth (21%) of TMOs, tenants were in a minority on the board. This reflects the high levels of Right to Buy sales in some areas and the strong interest of leaseholders in maintaining their neighbourhoods as

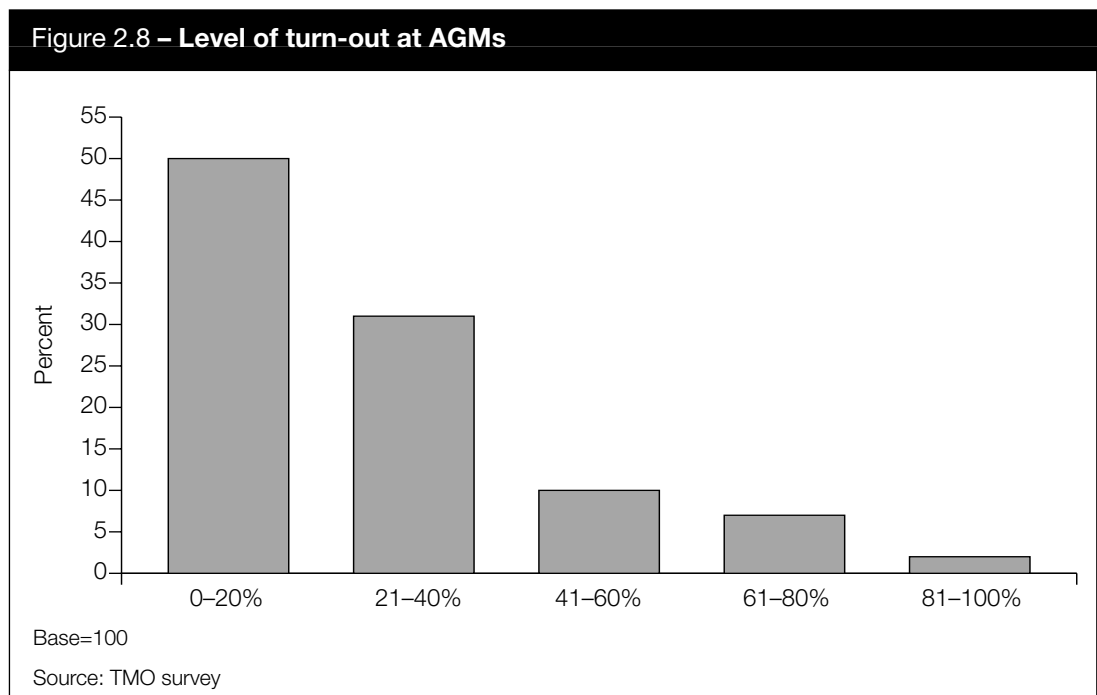
desirable places to live. Some boards had a maximum number of seats for leaseholders. Others expressed concern at being unable to recruit freeholder members to designated seats on the board. The implications of high levels of leaseholder membership of TMO boards are discussed in Chapter 4.

## Vacancies

- 2.41 Half the boards in the survey (51%) had unfilled vacancies and of these, 70% had between one and three vacancies. Difficulties in recruiting active members were mentioned by more than 70% of TMOs; and the high proportion with unfilled vacancies is clearly a reflection of this. On some boards, these vacancies were for co-optees and were filled as and when appropriate. In some instances, board size reflected the size of the original tenants group and was unnecessarily large and no longer appropriate (see section on Sustainability in Chapter 4). Wider use of co-option and reducing the size of some boards are two possible approaches to decreasing the number of vacancies.
- 2.42 Less than half the TMOs (44%) involved non-board members in other ways: mainly through sub-committees. These included a wide range of topics, but most frequently mentioned were repairs, finance, allocations and gardening.

## AGMs

- 2.43 Turn-outs at AGMs appear extremely variable: smaller TMOs appear better able to achieve higher turnouts than the larger ones. Half (50%) of responding TMOs obtained turn-outs of over 20% of their members which seems high for a community organisation of any kind (see Figure 2.8).



- 2.44 In some cases, not all tenants and residents are members of the TMO, so that high percentage turn-outs of members may not reflect a high turn-out of all residents.

## Best Value Performance Indicators

- 2.45 A majority of respondents did not complete questions on the Best Value Performance Indicators (with the exception of average relet times), in some cases because the data were not available, and in others, because they covered areas outwith their responsibilities. TMOs were not alone in this: not all local authorities had implemented collection of the Best Value Performance Indicators. In addition, the wide range of responses to these questions throw some doubt on the reliability of the data. The question of monitoring performance information is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

## CRE Code of Practice on Rented Housing

- 2.46 More than half (55%) of those responding to the question had adopted the CRE's *Code of Practice for Rented Housing* (CRE, 1991); while 16% had not and another 29% did not know whether they had or not. In some cases, TMOs had their own equal opportunities policy and appeared to consider this sufficient. In comparison, the Audit Commission found that more than one third of English councils are still not following the *Code of Practice on Rented Housing* (Audit Commission, 2002). It may be appropriate for the CRE code to be more widely disseminated to TMOs in order to ensure that it is more widely adopted.

## Local authority support

- 2.47 Ongoing support and development from local authorities to TMOs was variable. Forty-nine authorities employed specialist staff to assist with the development and ongoing support to TMOs. In some instances, these were generic tenant participation staff, while a few authorities employ dedicated specialist staff to work with TMOs.
- 2.48 Just over half (53%) of those with established TMOs said that they provided specialist staff to work with TMOs. In comparison, only 14% of those with no established TMOs employed specialist staff. Promotional and support work by local authorities appears to be a factor in the development of TMOs.
- 2.49 Most responding TMOs (83%) received support from their local authority in the form of a liaison officer and 65% had regular meetings with local authority staff and 60% access to office space. Around half mentioned training support (52%) and funding for training (49%). Thirty two per cent mentioned council provision of office equipment.
- 2.50 There was a broad range of other advice and support available to established TMOs, although this also appears to be variable and related to the number of TMOs in the authority. IT services and IT training, personnel and employment advice, and advice on financial management were mentioned by 11 authorities. Other types of assistance

included: grants (8), legal advice (5), office accommodation (1), translation and interpretation service (1), and a meeting space (1). Seven authorities said that advice and support was provided as required and three mentioned that members of their staff who sat on the TMO board were a source of advice and support.

- 2.51 Although a relatively small proportion of responding TMOs mentioned types of additional support which they would find useful (for example, 20% cited training), nearly half (48%) said that the attitude of the local authority or some of its staff was one of their main problems as a TMO. The relationship with local authorities appears to be of greater concern to TMOs than the support or resources which they may have available to them. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

## Training

- 2.52 The most frequently mentioned topic of training was housing management. Other training provided included coverage of the management agreement and core competencies, IT, HR (recruitment and interviewing), legal, financial, anti-social behaviour, the Private Finance Initiative and Arms Length Management.
- 2.53 The main source of specialist training mentioned by local authorities was Section 16 agencies (19). In-house provision was also mentioned. Some authorities include TMO staff in any training offered to their own staff, and TMO members are also able in some cases to attend training offered to other tenants. One authority mentioned the National Certificate in Tenant Participation.
- 2.54 Most authorities with established TMOs provided some general training for them. In a few instances the authority provided a structured programme. Around one-third (17) of the authorities with established TMOs said that training was provided on an *ad hoc* basis, in response to identified needs or specific requests.
- 2.55 Twenty-one authorities said that they were able to provide training to emerging groups. Three authorities mentioned visits to other TMOs. It appears that outside of those authorities where TMOs already exist, training for tenants interested in learning about TMOs is not widely available from local authorities, presumably because Section 16 funding is seen as the appropriate source.

## Internet access

- 2.56 Most TMOs (65%) had internet access although a substantial minority did not. TMOs in district councils were most likely to have internet access, followed by London boroughs. TMOs in the metropolitan authorities were least likely to have internet access.
- 2.57 Financial support for internet access was not mentioned by TMOs as something they would find useful, although it would seem a potentially useful way of increasing opportunities for exchange of information and good practice, as well as in line with the Government's objectives for e-governance (LGA/DTLR, 2002). With the introduction of TMO-Online,

internet access will be especially valuable to TMOs, allowing for greater sharing of information on, for example: good practice, contractors and staffing.

## Monitoring

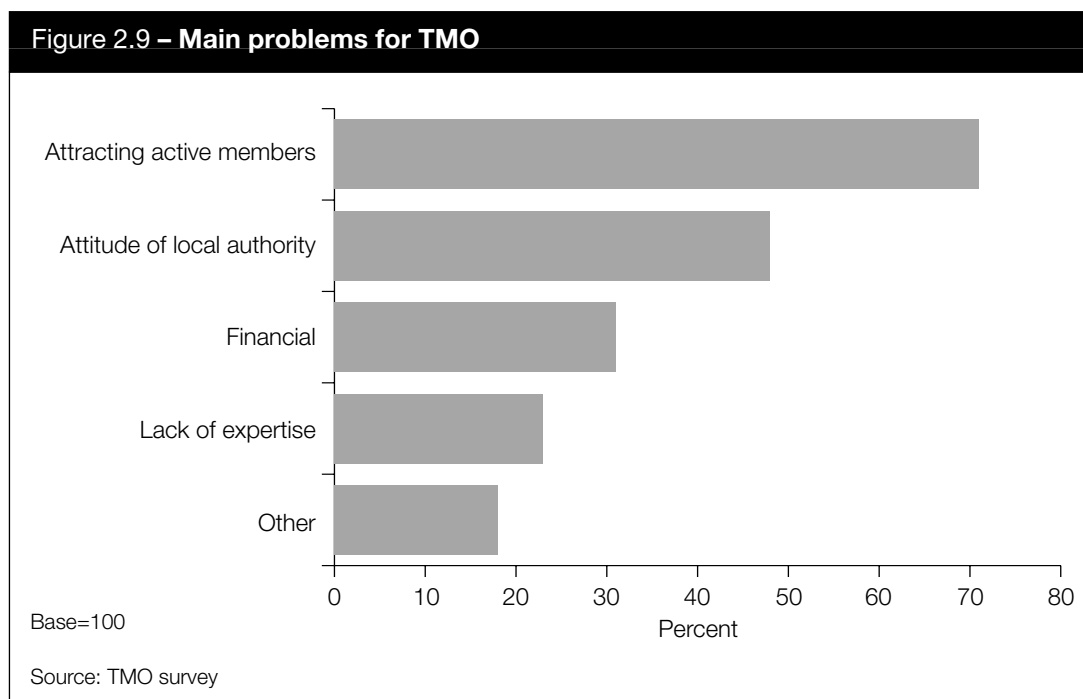
- 2.58 The great majority of authorities with established TMOs (87%) monitored them, both in terms of housing management and as voluntary organisations, through their housing management section. In five authorities (11%), monitoring was conducted by tenant participation or community development staff, while only one authority said that monitoring was done by their finance department. However, monitoring in many authorities appeared to be informal and this was confirmed in the case studies.

## Achievements and what TMOs do well

- 2.59 TMOs were asked open questions about their achievements and what they did well. These presented some difficulty in coding. Responses between the two questions overlapped and were focused on the successful management and maintenance of estates that had often been perceived to be neglected by the local authority landlord.
- 2.60 Providing a faster, better repairs service; reducing voids and relet times; and creating a better environment through improvements in cleaning and grounds maintenance were recurring themes. TMOs frequently mentioned being able to provide a local estate-based service, more caring and personal in its dealing with tenants as one of their achievements: “It has strengthened the feeling of community as the office provides a focal point. It is also more able to get involved and help residents more with day to day matters than the local authority can” (TMO survey response).
- 2.61 Building community spirit was another commonly perceived achievement. Respondents also cited improvements in security, reductions in crime, and good budget management as part of their success.
- 2.62 The range of achievements was impressive: from a pioneering choice-based lettings scheme, Investors in People accreditation and a repairs benchmarking pilot with a local RSL at Bushbury Hill in Wolverhampton, to obtaining external funding from the local Health Action Zone and European Social Fund at Hollin in Rochdale. Respondents elsewhere pointed to successful modernisations and major works, as well as service improvements and less tangible successes.
- 2.63 There was a strong sense of pride in their achievements as illustrated by one Lambeth TMO: “We were voted best housing service provider against all the Borough’s TMOs and Borough Housing Offices in 1999/2000; consistently in top 10 performers” (TMO survey response).

## Areas for improvements and problems

- 2.64 There was some overlap in responses to the questions of what could be improved and the main problems for the TMO. The main problems and areas for improvement were focused around difficulties in attracting active members and relations with the local authority (see Figure 2.9). These concerns also emerged in the case studies and are discussed in Chapter 4.



- 2.65 Nearly one-third (31%) identified financial problems as their main problem. Some commented on the low level of allowances received from their local authority and the difficulty of financial planning when relying on the local authority for information.
- 2.66 Although stakeholder interviews threw up concerns about the lack of follow-on training for established TMOs, other issues appeared to present a more serious threat to the long-term sustainability of TMOs. These were firstly, building an active membership, and secondly, lack of interest or even obstruction from some local authorities. Other problems identified included: leaseholder properties being privately rented; problems with areas adjacent but outside the TMOs control; and weaknesses in their own internal operations.

## Initial objectives

- 2.67 The responding TMOs' objectives do not fall into neat categories, although better management (especially voids and allocations) and maintenance of their homes were frequently mentioned: for example, "to improve the housing service and get properties improved". Another theme was the overarching goal of improving the quality of residents' lives and their environment.

2.68 Below are a number of examples of the kinds of responses to this question:

- “to give good, quick, efficient and caring service”;
- “to fight for an adequate share of resources; local decisions to be made by local people; to improve quality of life for every member of our community”;
- “to provide a responsive repairs service to tenants; to improve the environment – the block and grounds; to foster a community spirit; to have more of a say in housing services provided by the council.”

2.69 More than three quarters (76%) of responding TMOs felt that all or most of their original objectives had been achieved. None felt that they had failed and a couple felt that they had far exceeded them. The more moderate responses were mainly from newly established TMOs that felt that they had some way to go: “we are slowly working towards meeting our objectives”.

## ‘Failed’ TMOs

2.70 Eleven ‘failed’ TMOs were identified from the local authority survey, i.e. established TMOs no longer in operation. No single set of causes emerged, however the ‘failure rate’ of 5% appears low for organisations relying on voluntary input. The reasons for failure included: over-promotion by consultants (2), lack of community support (2), and individual circumstances such as the death of a key activist where no-one was able to replace her, and a case of mismanagement by the chair. Lack of local authority support may also be a factor, however, local authority respondents would have been unlikely to identify this as a reason for the collapse of an established TMO. It is likely that a number of other ‘failures’ have not been captured by the survey data due to staff turnover within local authorities and the consequent loss of organisational memory.

## Lessons for the future

2.71 TMOs were asked what lessons they would or could offer to future TMOs. Their answers were on occasion contradictory – for example, differing views about whether or not to take on the full range of responsibilities from day one. Persistence and perseverance were emphasised; the importance of training before, during *and* after establishment; the importance of appointing a good estate manager; and the need to build a good relationship with the local authority were all identified as important points for developing TMOs to consider: “get every allowance you are entitled to; employ good staff (direct or seconded); try and get the local authority on your side”.

2.72 Prospective TMOs were also warned to “be prepared for a long hard slog” and “to be sure about embarking on the TMO route; consider all options carefully first”. Although no TMO expressed regrets, some comments indicated that the amount of work involved would not be appropriate for everyone.

## Conclusion

- 2.73 The survey of local authorities provided a useful snapshot of the extent of established and developing TMOs in England; the kind of support and training available to them; and the information needed to conduct the survey of TMOs and establish a database on TMOs. The picture is a moving one, TMOs are dynamic organisations. It is inevitable that since the surveys were conducted, further changes will have occurred.
- 2.74 There is a clear relationship between the type of local authority and the existence of established TMOs. The presence of TMOs is also related to the size of the local authority stock, but this is to some extent a function of the type of local authority.
- 2.75 The TMO questionnaires revealed the breadth of activities taken on by TMOs, and the widely held view among respondents that they had improved on the landlord's service and were meeting, if not exceeding, their objectives.
- 2.76 The most established and successful TMOs were planning their next steps, and stock transfer to a TMO or the lead role in neighbourhood management were viewed as attractive possibilities. More than half were considering expanding their responsibilities in one way or another, and this seems to provide evidence of some kind of community empowerment taking place as the organisations and their members grow in confidence. A wealth of experience is now available from established TMOs and it appears that many of them are keen to share it.

# CHAPTER 3

## Indicators and criteria for evaluation

- 3.01 To evaluate Tenant Management Organisations satisfactorily, indicators and criteria for evaluation were identified and refined during the research. These were developed from the original specification, followed by a review of the literature and discussions with key stakeholders in the initial scoping stage of the study.
- 3.02 It was considered important to select a combination of descriptive and performance indicators to inform the evaluation of the case study TMOs. Process, output and outcome indicators were included as a means of achieving a holistic evaluation of established TMOs. While the descriptive indicators attempted to capture the more qualitative aspects of tenant management organisations, contributing to the wider evaluation and providing a basis for comparisons between TMOs; the performance indicators concentrate on housing management and maintenance.
- 3.03 In terms of the output indicators, four basic criteria were specified which can be applied to all these measures:
- At the least, that tenants experience no diminution in services, or in the quality of services, as a result of tenant management. All the established TMO case studies had been operational for over 12 months to allow time for changes in service levels and standards to be achieved.
  - Comparison of TMOs' performance with the Best Value Performance Indicators rating of the local authority in which they are situated for those functions for which the TMO has responsibility: for example, not all case study TMOs were involved in rent collection.
  - Comparison of TMOs' performance with the Best Value Performance Indicators nationally, for those functions for which the TMO has responsibility.
  - The extent to which measurable progress has been made on the problems identified in the development stage of the TMO and the aims which the TMO set itself.
- 3.04 Initially, the research team envisaged using all the relevant Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) to facilitate comparison with local authorities. However, as other studies (Cole et al, 2001, Tunstall, 2001) have discovered, there are serious constraints on

collecting reliable and accurate performance and cost data at the local level. At the TMO level, this is due to a number of reasons:

- the range of functions – not all TMOs carry out the functions covered by the Best Value Performance Indicators e.g. management of rent arrears or repairs administration;
- of those TMOs that do, most do not keep accounts in a form that would enable the calculation of the relevant statistics, for example: the full cost of management including local authority support costs is not reflected in their accounts;
- all TMOs prepare annual accounts to meet statutory requirements, but do not provide disaggregated data to allow accurate costings to be derived from them;
- in some cases little or no performance monitoring or reporting is carried out;
- the collection and reporting of performance data by the TMO is very much related to the performance culture of the local authority;
- there is enormous difficulty inherent in apportioning centralised costs in a meaningful and realistic manner.

3.05 Although reliable cost data was not therefore available, performance data provide meaningful evidence of the value or otherwise of TMOs, as these are the benchmarks by which all housing management organisations are judged by both service providers and tenants. It was therefore decided to concentrate on performance indicators in four key areas of standard service delivery: repairs, relets, rent collection and tenant satisfaction. Repairs, relets and tenant satisfaction were of special interest as these were areas which TMO committee members frequently cited as important areas of improvement while rent collection was mentioned by some stakeholder interviewees as a potential area of weakness in TMOs. For service providers, these are also the core elements of housing management performance information.

3.06 Where available, examples and views were collected on other areas of housing management such as voids and environmental management to provide a more qualitative picture of how well TMOs are performing. Part of the research objective was to assess how far TMOs contribute extra benefits to their areas under the general heading of community capacity building. It was impossible to identify robust indicators for this, although the tenant survey as well as the interviews with activists offer some hints. The visits to the case study estates yielded observational data, which were inevitably impressionistic and anecdotal, but these impressions were strongly positive.

## Key areas identified

3.07 Some of the key areas and accompanying indicators identified for comparison across the case studies are set out below. Although robust quantitative data for some of the original indicators were not available, all these aspects of TMO activity were explored in the case studies and thus provide the framework for the findings section of the report.

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

### **Repairs and maintenance service**

- 1) average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (BVPI).

### **Lettings**

- 2) average relet times for units let in financial year (BVPI).

### **Voids**

- 3) the number of properties vacant and details of any change over time.

### **Rent collection and arrears management**

- 4) percentage of rent collected, excluding former tenants' arrears (BVPI).

### **Environment**

- 5) quality of grounds maintenance: good/fair/poor.

### **Tenancy management (anti-social behaviour, harassment, neighbour dispute)**

- 6) procedure for dealing with anti-social behaviour, harassment and neighbour disputes.

### **Tenant Satisfaction**

- 7) number of complaints received per annum.
- 8) tenant satisfaction survey responses.

## **PERFORMANCE AS AN ORGANISATION**

### **Governance and accountability**

- 9) percentage turn-out at AGM.
- 10) the availability of minutes of meetings to all tenants.

### **Sustainability**

- 11) number of unfilled seats on the board.
- 12) level of funding provided for ongoing training of committee members.
- 13) number of hours a week contributed by board members to TMO work on average.

### **Staffing and Employment**

- 14) level of staff turnover.

### **Openness, diversity and inclusiveness**

- 15) adherence to the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Rented Housing (BVPI) (CRE,1991).
- 16) gender and age balance of board members.

## **'VALUE-ADDED' AREAS**

### **Tenant information and participation**

- 17) percentage of tenants is satisfied with opportunities for participation in management and decision-making (BVPI) and means by which this is established Capacity-building, community and empowerment.
- 18) evidence of board members go on to further education/training/employment/other public office.
- 19) number and type of non-housing management staff employed.
- 20) level of progress towards achieving original aims.

### **Partnership working, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal**

- 21) evidence of partnership/links with other organisations.
- 22) evidence of success in levering-in money from LA, and non-LA, sources.

### **Security**

- 23) evidence of a reduction in vandalism/criminal damage/graffiti per annum.

# CHAPTER 4

## TMOs in action

4.01 In this chapter, we bring together our findings from the stakeholder interviews, case studies including the residents' survey and regional workshops under the headings identified as criteria for evaluation in Chapter 3. Some additional points that emerged from the case studies are also included. More detail on individual case studies is available in the Appendix III, and ideas to consider as examples of good practice are presented where relevant.

### Background to the case studies

4.02 Following the compilation of the comprehensive database of established and developing TMOs, case studies were selected to reflect a good cross-section of TMOs, broadly reflective of the variety that exists. Stakeholder interviews and the TMO survey highlighted the uniqueness of every TMO, however some key variables were identified that were used to select sixteen established and two developing TMOs for detailed study.

The selection was made to ensure the case studies included a cross-section in terms of:

- type of authority: London borough, metropolitan authority, district council, LSVT;
- location by region;
- pre-Right to Manage; Right to Manage; in development;
- number of dwellings;
- level of black and minority ethnic residents' involvement (in terms of board membership);
- range of responsibilities.

4.03 The final selection was determined in part by the willingness of TMOs and their local authorities to be involved in the research. The grid below (Table 4.1) presents the case studies and how they met the criteria for selection.

4.04 The case studies provided more detailed information upon which to base the overall evaluation and also illustrated some of the current changes that TMOs are experiencing. For example, Delves East has joint management arrangements with Delves West, while the Walsall TMOs are currently looking to establish WATMOS, a LSVT association bringing most of the established Walsall TMOs together. Digmoor EMB and Belle Isle EMB are currently undertaking Options Studies, in line with a number of pre-Right to Manage

TMOs; and Glebe Gardens is one of a growing number of TMOs which have been transferred to a housing association as part of a large-scale voluntary transfer.

**Table 4.1 – TMO Case Studies**

Name of TMO	Authority	LA Type	Region	Status	Size	BME*
Alpha	Sheffield	MBC	Yorkshire	RtM	100-199	
Applegarth House Co-op	Southwark	LBC	London/SE	pre-RtM	0-99	
Belle Isle (N) EMB	Leeds	MBC	Yorkshire	pre-RtM	500+	
Carlton Vale	Westminster	LBC	London/SE	RtM	100-199	
Cottington Close	Lambeth	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499	
Delves East	Walsall	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	100-199	
Digmoor EMB	West Lancs.	DC	N.West	pre-RtM	500+	
Dixon Clark Court	Islington	LBC	London/SE	RtM	0-99	
Five Ways TMC	Lewisham	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499	✓
Glebe Gardens TMO	Richmond	LSVT	London/SE	LSVT	100-199	
Grosvenor & Regency	Westminster	LBC	London/SE	RtM	500+	
Heath Town EMB	Wolverh'ton	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	500+	✓
Kerridge Ct	Islington	LBC	London/SE	In devpt	100-199	
Roupell Park	Lambeth	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499	✓
SMART	Carlisle	DC	N.West	In devpt	100-199	
Springs TMC	Bury	MBC	N.West	RtM	200-499	
The Avenues TMO	Walsall	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	200-499	
Turf Hill EMB	Rochdale	MBC	N.West	RtM	200-499	

\* denotes 3 or more board members are black or ethnic minority.

- 4.05 Within the case studies, semi-structured interviews were carried out with TMO board members and staff, local authority staff and members. Performance data was collected from TMOs and their local authorities and a sample survey of tenants and residents of Right to Buy properties was conducted throughout the established TMO case studies. This enabled the research team to triangulate their findings and explore any gaps or inconsistencies that emerged.
- 4.06 It is important to emphasise the challenge of the task. TMOs vary considerably in size, location, local context, history, composition and goals making meaningful comparisons difficult and not always useful. However, some common features emerged and together provide useful examples and lessons for good practice elsewhere.
- 4.07 Each of the TMOs included in the study was characterised by the pride of the committee members and many staff in their achievements, enthusiasm and commitment to their communities.

## Reasons for establishing TMOs

- 4.08 The main factors leading to the set up of the case study TMOs were dissatisfaction with council services and costs. Poor repairs, grounds maintenance and cleaning were important factors in pushing tenants to opt for tenant management. In addition, some of the case studies were at the periphery of local authority boundaries and residents felt that they were frequently neglected as a consequence.

- 4.09 Under the Estate Action programme, tenant management had been seen as a route to increased resources and better management in some of the case studies. The availability of Section 16 funding had also played a useful role in contributing to the development of some TMOs, but dissatisfaction with housing management and repairs was the main driver.

## Performance

- 4.10 The initial stakeholder interviews found a widely held view that TMOs were generally effective housing management organisations, although there was less certainty about their efficiency. While measures of efficiency remain elusive because of the technical problems discussed in Chapter 3, it was possible to look at the effectiveness and overall performance of TMOs in respect of their housing management and maintenance functions.
- 4.11 Most of the statistical data on performance had to be compiled manually as the systems on which TMOs maintain their records do not allow for easy compilation of the data required for the study. As TMOs manage much smaller numbers of properties than local authorities, statistics can be easily skewed by a few unusual events. As such, they are not readily comparable with local authorities.
- 4.12 In many instances, TMOs were established because of dissatisfaction with the local authority about its ability to provide an adequate level of service to a specific estate. Many of these estates have inherent problems such as the poor quality of the housing stock, high rise blocks etc. Comparing the TMO performance with the average local authority performance will not show relative performance between local authority management and TMO management of the same properties or indeed of similar types of properties. Consequently, it might be anticipated that TMO performance would be below that of the local authority average.
- 4.13 Some apparent gaps in the data were because the TMO did not carry out the functions in question (Turf Hill), because the format was not comparable (Digmaor) and in the case of Kerridge Court and SMART, because the TMOs were still in development. In two cases data could not be obtained, but the case study visits and the tenant survey did not suggest that these were poor performers.
- 4.14 The majority of case study TMOs (where data were available) were performing better than their local authorities in terms of completion of urgent and non-urgent repairs, relet times and rent collection (see Table 4.2). Many compared favourably with the top quartile of local authorities. They emerge as well-managed organisations providing an effective service. Similar conclusions were reached by Gillanders and Blackaby 'the evidence suggests that on the whole residents manage as well as or better than mainstream housing organisations' (Gillanders and Blackaby, 1999).

**Table 4.2 – Performance in comparison with local authorities in 2001**

TMO	Urgent repairs better than LA	Urgent repairs Above top quartile	Completion days Better than LA	Completion days above top	Relets better than LA quartile	Relets above top quartile	Rent collection better than LA	Rent collection better than LA
Alpha	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Applegarth	✓	✓	✓	✓	x*	x*	✓	✓
Belle Isle	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carlton Vale	✓	✓	✓	=	✓	✓		
Cottington Close					x	x	✓	x
Delves	✓	✓	✓	x	=	x	✓	✓
Five Ways	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glebe Gardens	N/A	✓	N/A	✓				
GREMO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heath Town	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x		
RouPELL Park					✓	✓	✓	✓
Springs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Avenues	✓	✓			=	✓		

\* reflects long-running dispute over one property

4.15 There was general agreement in the case studies that day-to-day repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance in particular were done better by the TMOs than their local authority and represented good value for money. In most cases, the TMOs had generated surpluses and reported a low level of complaints.

4.16 However, for some TMOs, the incentive to increase efficiency and make savings was limited as some authorities retained any savings achieved or reduced allowances in following years. Some clear guidance on what is an acceptable surplus is necessary as TMOs need to be able to accumulate some level of surplus for contingencies. One TMO put 12% of any surplus into a contingency fund.

## Repairs and maintenance service

### Indicator 1: Average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (BVPI)

4.17 Seven of the nine local authority TMOs for which there are available data on the average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs were outperforming their local authority. Seven of the ten TMOs equalled or surpassed the best 25% of local authorities in 2001 (DTLR, 2001). Six of the seven council TMOs providing data on the percentage of urgent repairs completed within government timescales outperformed their local authority in 2001. Six of them equalled or surpassed the top quartile of local authorities in 2001. Thus the majority of case study TMOs appeared to be providing an excellent repairs service.

- 4.18 Improving the quality and speed of the repairs service was a major impetus for many residents in opting for tenant management. Consequently, the success or otherwise of TMOs in achieving improvements in repairs and maintenance must be a critical measure of success for tenants.
- 4.19 The results of the residents survey found 69% of tenants in the case study TMOs were satisfied with the way the TMO carried out repairs and maintenance compared with 59% in the Survey of English Housing 2000/2001 (Bates et al, 2002). More than 40% thought that the quality of repairs had improved (16% thought they had got worse) and 45% thought that the speed of repairs had got better (20% thought they had got worse).
- 4.20 Staff and board members in the case studies felt strongly that not only was their repairs performance on a par or better than the local authority's in terms of response times, but also in terms of the quality of work and the friendliness of their repairs staff. Where these improvements had not been achieved, TMOs felt it was due to lack of control: either because they were tied into a contract with the Direct Services Organisation (DSO) or with the council's repairs contractor.
- 4.21 Case studies gave examples of the kinds of savings they had been able to achieve: for example, repairing communal lighting for £84 when the landlord had been quoted £600 for the same job. Another improvement that a number of case studies mentioned was better monitoring of contractors' work. This was considered possible because of the proximity of the TMO office and the greater commitment of residents to obtaining value for money.
- 4.22 Nine of the 16 case studies employed a handyman who could undertake minor repairs, or other repairs staff. Some of these staff combined repairs work with caretaking or cleaning responsibilities. Local estate based handymen could respond almost instantly to requests for minor repairs and were considered by board members to be an important benefit of TMO status.
- 4.23 Differences of opinion over repairs responsibilities between TMOs and the local authority were a major source of friction and frustration among case study TMOs. In some cases, to avoid expected long delays, TMOs were undertaking work that was believed to be the local authority's responsibility.

**Good practice example:** Most case study TMOs employ a handyman to do minor repairs.

**Good practice example:** Bloomsbury EMB in Birmingham, Lancaster West EMB in Kensington and Chelsea and Leathermarket JMB in Southward are setting up residents' services organisations to deliver local services and employ local residents at the neighbourhood level.

**Good practice example:** Bushbury Hill in Wolverhampton has set up a repairs benchmarking pilot with a local registered social landlord.

## Lettings

### **Indicator 2: Average relet times for units let in financial year (BVPI)**

- 4.24 Eight of the twelve TMOs for which there are data on the average time taken to relet a property were outperforming their local authority and the top 25% of local authorities in 2001. Two more were matching their council's performance. One other TMO was engaged in a long-running dispute with the local authority about one flat that affected the overall average. Given that local authority nominations may have to go through additional stages when letting a TMO property, these results are striking. It is also worth noting that a couple of TMOs attributed their success to changes in the allocations policy that they had been able to negotiate with the local authority. Forty-five per cent of tenants thought that the speed of lettings had got better on their TMO, compared with 10% who thought it had got worse.
- 4.25 The degree of control over allocations and lettings which an individual TMO has is very variable. Although ten case study TMOs nominally had control over allocations and lettings, in practice, this varied from simply accepting the local authority nomination to operating a local allocations policy with additional points for local connection and a power to veto local authority nominations.
- 4.26 Some case studies were frustrated at their lack of control over lettings and felt that this was an obstacle to developing a sustainable community and recruiting active members onto the TMO. A few interviewees felt that their local authority was nominating 'difficult' tenants in disproportionate numbers to the TMO. This may reflect misconceptions about current levels of demand and constraints of need-based allocations among TMOs as local authorities have a duty to maintain a unified housing register and operate a transparent allocation system.

**Good practice example:** Bushbury Hill TMO in Wolverhampton has developed a choice-based lettings policy along the lines of the Delft model. Through this it has been able to achieve a 50% reduction in voids.

**Good practice example:** Turf Hill EMB decided not to take on allocations, but has input into the lettings policy, and has recently added to it to allow extra points for local connection.

**Good practice example:** A number of case study TMOs undertake accompanied viewings to increase the take-up of offers on their estates.

## Voids

### **Indicator 3: Number of properties vacant and details of any change over time**

- 4.27 Reducing the number of voids was frequently mentioned as one of the achievements of the established TMO by case study interviewees. Five of the case studies were able to

demonstrate that they had lower voids than when they had taken over management responsibilities from the local authority. For example, one case study had been able to move from 8 voids at set up, to a position where they had a waiting list.

- 4.28 Some TMOs had also been able to reduce the costs of work to voids: in one case costs had been reduced from £1,000 to £200. Another TMO had reduced its void costs by introducing minimum physical standards for void properties and negotiating that incoming tenants would accept property that met those standards.
- 4.29 The scope for reducing voids depended on the management agreement – whether or not the TMO was tied into using the DSO, and on the local housing market context. Reduced demand for social housing in certain parts of the country means that some TMOs are finding it difficult to let properties. One case study had achieved a significant reduction in voids in its early years, but was now struggling in the face of declining demand for social housing in the area. In this case, the weekly cost of buying a house was now significantly lower than renting from the local authority.

**Good practice example:** One case study with high voids levels prioritised letting empty properties at the entrance to the estate to make the estate look more welcoming and less neglected. In addition, the TMO stopped using sitex on empty properties and replaced it with net curtains, in many cases provided for free by local residents.

**Good practice example:** Five Ways offers difficult-to-let properties to tenants on a take-as-seen basis and grants them a decorating allowance.

## Rent collection and arrears management

### **Indicator 4: Percentage of rent collected, excluding former tenants' arrears (BVPI)**

- 4.30 Relatively few TMOs undertake rent collection. In the stakeholder interviews, rent and arrears collection was considered to be an area of potential weakness in TMOs: they were seen as “soft”. However, some of the interviewees thought that TMOs could be harder on tenants in arrears than local authorities, acting more promptly.
- 4.31 The results from the case studies provide evidence of TMOs' effectiveness at rent collection. All of the seven TMOs for which there are data on the percentage of rent collected were outperforming their local authority and five were doing as well as the top 25% of local authorities in 2001.
- 4.32 Interviews in the case studies found TMOs varied in their willingness to take on rent and service charge collection and arrears collection. One case study had returned service charge collection to the local authority and some TMOs were clear that they did not want responsibility for rents. Others saw rent collection as a source of income and were tackling arrears assertively as part of good housing management practice. Roupell Park reported receiving a £20,000 bonus from the local authority for its achievements in reducing rent arrears. While many TMO members emphasised the importance of confidentiality, one case study had taken the rather irregular approach of “naming and shaming” tenants in rent

arrears in the TMO newsletter and the local press. This would not normally be regarded as good practice, but does indicate the willingness of the TMO to tackle rent arrears.

**Good practice example:** Bloomsbury TMO in Birmingham has set up a credit union to help to tackle poverty on the estate. A number of other TMOs including Belle Isle and Digmaor EMBs are also involved in credit unions as part of a holistic approach to reducing arrears, tackling poverty and social exclusion on their estates. At The Avenues in Walsall, some TMO members have received training on credit unions and the local credit union uses the TMO office.

**Good practice example:** Clapton Park TMO in Hackney employs a welfare advice worker and supports a credit union to help residents in financial difficulties.

## Environment

### **Indicator 5: Quality of grounds maintenance: good/fair/poor**

- 4.33 The majority of case study TMOs had responsibility for grounds maintenance. In the two areas where the quality of grounds maintenance was poor, it had remained a local authority responsibility. Most of the estates were clean and tidy with little sign of graffiti or vandalism. The views expressed in the residents survey provide confirmation of the generally good quality of both grounds maintenance and estate cleaning: 45% of tenants said that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better compared with 10% who thought that it had got worse; and 48% said that the quality of estate cleaning had got better compared with 11% who thought that it had got worse.
- 4.34 Given that dissatisfaction with grounds maintenance and the general physical appearance of the estate was frequently mentioned as one of the reasons for setting up a TMO, this is an important measure for success from the perspective of tenants and other residents.
- 4.35 Many of the case study TMOs undertook regular, weekly estate inspections that enabled early identification of abandoned cars, fly-tipping, graffiti and vandalism. Where handyman schemes operated, the role sometimes included a caretaking or cleaning element. Litter-picking, gardening and grounds maintenance are, in some cases, carried out voluntarily by committee members and tenants; Applegarth TMC, for example, estimated that they saved £6,000 per annum by using voluntary labour rather than paying a contractor.
- 4.36 Surpluses were frequently used in the case studies to carry out improvements to the environment and general appearance of the estate. For example, Grosvenor & Regency EMO organised a planting day providing planting boxes and pot plants for estate residents, while Glebe Gardens had invested in better equipment for grounds maintenance, planted carefully selected trees to screen off a busy road and provided a £200 grant to each of the blocks to use for planting, benches or similar initiatives.
- 4.37 TMO case studies had also been able to attract additional funds for environmental work. The Avenues in Walsall had obtained regeneration funds to carry out a Planning for Real exercise with Groundwork Trust to identify residents' priorities for environmental

improvements. New Deal funds had then been used to provide work placements for young long-term unemployed people. This Environmental Project aimed to develop skills and experience among the young people, while providing the front fencing and improvements to alleyways that residents had prioritised. SMART, the TMO case study in development, won an award for its gardens and, in a nice touch of local identity, planted the St Martins emblem of a housemartin bird in the flower-bed at the entrance to the estate.

**Good practice example:** Alpha TMC provides a dry store for its tenants and a free two-monthly skip visit, thus discouraging flytipping.

**Good practice example:** Roupell Park RMC has sheds to rent at £1 per week, and provides daily rubbish collection and free bulk rubbish collection.

## Tenancy management (anti-social behaviour, harassment, neighbour dispute)

### Indicator 6: Procedure for dealing with anti-social behaviour, harassment and neighbour disputes

- 4.38 In the initial scoping interviews, some interviewees expressed doubts about the effectiveness of TMOs in dealing with tenancy management issues such as neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and harassment. Among the case study TMOs, most followed the same procedures as their local authority. They appeared on the whole to be likely to step in earlier, and in a number of instances were critical of the perceived reluctance of their local authority to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- 4.39 TMO case studies were not on the whole a “soft touch”. Several case study TMOs had obtained Anti-Social Behaviour Orders against anti-social tenants through the local authority, while others preferred a more conciliatory approach and went to considerable lengths to resolve problems through mediation. A robust and assertive stand on anti-social behaviour was in some instances married with a preventive approach, concentrating on providing activities for young people on the estate.

**Good practice example:** Grosvenor and Regency EMO has fundraised for a DJ mixing unit for which young people on the estate need to have a membership card. If they are seen spraying graffiti, their membership is withdrawn.

**Good practice example:** Belle Isle EMB organises activities for young people and in addition has set up the Winrose project on the estate which provides advice and support to young tenants in their first year of tenancy. Young tenants move into furnished accommodation for up to a year and may then move on elsewhere in the estate, contributing to the sustainability of the area in the long-term.

**Good practice example:** Cottington Close TMO has produced the Cottington Close Community Declaration after consultation with residents. This sets out what the TMO considers reasonable behaviour. Five key areas are identified: behaviour, crime prevention and community safety, children, mutual aid, and looking after the environment. The agreement also sets out what the TMO will do to respond to neighbour disputes.

## Tenant satisfaction

### Indicator 7: Number of complaints received per annum

### Indicator 8: Tenant satisfaction survey responses

- 4.40 To evaluate TMOs thoroughly, it was important to get beyond the views of the activists involved in the boards. A number of approaches to measuring tenants' satisfaction were used: tenants' complaints, TMO tenants survey results, the results of continuation ballots (the five yearly ballot of members on whether or not they wish the TMO to continue), and the results of a specially commissioned survey of tenants and leaseholders in the 16 established TMO case studies.
- 4.41 Levels of complaints were low, and in some case studies there had been no complaints in the previous year. This appears to indicate high levels of satisfaction and interviewees commented that complaints were low because repairs and other problems were dealt with straightaway:
- "If we have a complaint, then it's dealt with – so we don't keep a log. We don't ignore people"*  
TMO worker
- 4.42 However, mechanisms for formal recording of complaints were often weak. This may be because TMOs receive very few complaints, but there should be a procedure in place for logging them and the action taken and for reporting on them at management committees and AGMs. TMOs are not exceptional in their lack of procedure here: researchers from Sheffield Hallam University found that 34% of local authorities and 54% of housing associations failed to keep any records of complaints received (Cole et al 2001).
- 4.43 Both the continuation ballots that had occurred before the fieldwork in the case studies had been successful and in one of these, turn-out and votes in favour had increased. Cottington Close obtained a vote of over 90% in favour of continuing as a TMO, and Belle Isle obtained 95% in favour of continuation.
- 4.44 A number of TMOs had carried out tenants surveys in recent years. These were of variable quality, but demonstrated similar levels of satisfaction to our own survey. The survey commissioned for this study found tenant satisfaction compared favourably with that of council tenants interviewed for the Survey of English Housing (Bates et al, 2001). In the case study TMOs, 77% of TMO tenants were satisfied with the TMO overall compared with 67% of tenants in the Survey of English Housing (SEH), 2000/01, while only 14% of TMO residents were dissatisfied compared with 22% of tenants in the SEH.

- 4.45 Satisfaction among black and minority ethnic residents was particularly high: 81% were satisfied with the TMO overall. This compares favourably with other surveys where satisfaction among black and minority ethnic council tenants tends to be below average. For example, the overall satisfaction of black and minority ethnic social sector tenants with their landlord in the Survey of English Housing (2002) was 51% compared with 69% for social sector tenants overall.
- 4.46 Forty-three per cent of TMO residents thought that the area had got better in the last two years and 32% thought there had been no change. The majority of tenants in the TMOs agreed that the TMO was doing a good job (74%) and 77% agreed that the TMO played an important part in improving the quality of life in the area. Some committee members raised the point that the good service the TMO provided, raised the expectations of tenants and that, consequently, they became 'victims of their own success'.

## Value for money

- 4.47 Financial data are not enough to establish whether or not TMOs are providing value for money as many outcomes are not quantifiable and for many outputs the data are not available. For this reason, the researchers used a range of indicators including standard performance indicators to evaluate TMOs.
- 4.48 The case study TMOs provide good value for money in terms of delivering a better service, while in most cases achieving savings. The results of the analysis of the performance information demonstrate that TMOs are mostly outperforming their local authority, and in many cases, surpassing the top 25% of local authorities in the country. Certainly, TMO staff and board members were convinced that TMOs provided good value for money in spite of the resources needed to set them up and support them. 70% of tenants in the case study TMOs agreed that the TMO gave residents good value for money.
- 4.49 Annual performance data reflect some of the value of TMOs, however, the longer-term advantages are less easy to capture. The case studies illustrated the way in which TMOs have the ability to transform some difficult-to-manage and difficult-to-let estates into popular, dynamic areas of social housing.
- 4.50 In the case studies, the amount of time dedicated by board members varied from a high level of day-to-day involvement to a more hands-off approach, and reflected individuals' interest and availability. They did not themselves seek to put a price on their participation (although they did not like their time to be taken for granted) and it does not therefore seem appropriate to try to do so. In our view, the input of volunteers adds considerable value by the contribution of their knowledge and experience directly to their community.
- 4.51 It is equally problematic to put a price on the non-housing benefits of TMOs. Many board members had benefited in terms of self-confidence and the development of new skills. Some had gone on to education and employment following their involvement in the TMO, while others had become involved in other activities and organisations locally.
- 4.52 As communities, most of the case study TMOs had been able to improve the general physical environment and most had organised social and community activities for the

benefit of *all* residents. A number of TMOs had become the lightning conductors for regeneration and renewal projects in their area, providing a focus for other agencies. This may reflect the importance of a local presence, similar to the role identified by Power (1984) of the local housing office as a focus for community-building and community-sustaining activities. In other cases they have been able to maintain a reasonable quality of life in the TMO whilst other estates have deteriorated. If the estate's viability is improved by such achievements this is evidence of value for money, but the benefits will accrue over a longer time period than this research can cover.

- 4.53 Overall we concluded that the TMO is an important working model of local sustainability, which benefits from the substantial unpaid inputs of its members. Moreover the committee members and the staff and contractors that they employ are able to achieve value for money in the way that they deliver local services by significantly outperforming their respective local authorities, who have a much wider range of paid resources at their disposal. Many TMOs, which typically operate on estates where there has been significant underinvestment and service delivery failures in the past, have been providing excellent “neighbourhood management” in a modest and unsung manner over a period of years, and it is in this ability to deliver to their tenants that their real value for money lies.
- 4.54 In a wider context, the ability of TMOs to operate close to the ground should enable them to avoid some of the risks associated with decline, for example low demand issues, and also to play a positive role in area regeneration, building on both their records of tenant empowerment and involvement, and their knowledge of what the local needs and priorities are.

**Good practice example:** Westminster City Council plans to join Housemark to develop unit costs for the local authority as a whole and for TMOs in particular.

**Good practice example:** Westminster City Council has conducted a benchmarking project as part of a Best Value Review of TMOs. The project included “peerreview” visits which involved each authority undertaking a visit to its “partner” and seeing how they monitor and run TMOs.

## Governance and accountability

**Indicator 9: Percentage turn-out at Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

**Indicator 10: Availability of minutes to all tenants**

- 4.55 TMOs, as voluntary bodies, must work to their constitutions, follow democratic procedures, and report back on their work both to their members and to their landlords. Good governance can be assessed by the extent to which they are open, democratic, inclusive and accountable organisations.
- 4.56 The requirements of the constitution – holding regular management committee meetings, AGMs and elections for office – ensure that the mechanisms are in place for local accountability and we found no evidence in the case study TMOs that these procedures were

not being followed. Where problems were encountered, they were to do with achieving adequate attendance at meetings, and with performance reporting and monitoring.

- 4.57 Turn-out at AGMs among the case studies varied from 1% to 50% of the TMO membership. This did not appear to be related to the size of the TMO. In some TMOs, membership is not universal, so that a high percentage turn-out may reflect a relatively small proportion of the total number of people living in the TMO. Where turn-outs were low, board members were concerned to increase attendance. The TMO survey showed, on the other hand, that more than half (52%) of responding organisations obtained turnouts of 25% or more of their members which seems high for a community organisation. Turn-outs at AGMs (like turn-outs at elections) need to be monitored both by TMOs and local authorities to ensure quorums are achieved.
- 4.58 Minutes of meetings and AGMs were available in all case study TMOs, usually, at the TMO office on request. Some TMOs also had notice-boards around the estate where minutes, forthcoming meetings and other information were publicised.
- 4.59 The results of the residents' survey compare favourably with the Survey of English Housing (Bates et al, 2001) on the question of accountability. 36% of tenants and 47% of leaseholders and owners said that the TMO took a lot of account of tenants' views compared with 17% of council tenants in the SEH (Bates et al, 2001).

## **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

- 4.60 Composition and size of the case study boards varied according to the type of TMO. Estate Management Boards have designated places for local authority representatives, while co-operatives tend to limit membership to residents. Some of the latter were glad to have non-voting councillors on their committees, others were resistant to the idea of either councillor or local authority officer representation. Applegarth TMC has a system of having 'floor reps' on its committee as way of spreading representation and participation.
- 4.61 The case study boards varied between 8 and 22 members, and again the size of TMO did not appear to have much bearing on this. The balance of tenants and leaseholders and/or owner occupiers varied on the boards. In most cases, tenants were in a large majority, but two of the case studies had a majority of leaseholders on their boards. A number of boards reserved seats for leaseholders and/or owner occupiers, while others had a maximum proportion allowable for leaseholders. Clarification and guidance on this issue is needed. While leaseholders may often bring valuable knowledge and experience onto boards, along with a strong vested interest in improving their estate, their interests do not always coincide with those of tenants (see below section on leaseholder/owner occupier issues).
- 4.62 Management committee meetings were generally held monthly, but the full range varied from fortnightly to quarterly. Some of the case study TMOs delegated certain areas to sub-committees, such as finance and employment. The number of subcommittees was related to the size of the stock managed and the number of responsibilities taken on by the TMO. Heath Town in Wolverhampton, one of the largest TMOs in the study, has 8 sub-committees, Applegarth in Southwark, one of the smallest, has no standing subcommittees, but had set up ad hoc committees in the past to deal with specific, time-limited issues.

- 4.63 Practice about open/closed committee meetings varied. Some case study TMOs were reluctant to have open management meetings while others welcomed all residents to their meetings, to observe or to raise issues. Confidentiality is an issue here as individual tenants and members of staff are discussed at meetings: some TMOs got around this by having part of the meeting closed to non-committee members, or, as in the case of Heath Town, having closed sub-committees in place for staffing and finance matters. To ensure that TMOs are seen to be accountable, it is recommended that all board meetings are open to members with confidential business reserved to a closed part of the agenda or the appropriate sub-committee.

## **EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES**

- 4.64 Having a strong and effective board is key to good governance. The role of the chair is crucial here, and in the case study TMOs the chairs were generally people who had been involved for some time, often since the beginning, and who seemed well-respected by other committee members.
- 4.65 Having resident board members with a mixture of skills is also an asset to a TMO. Five Ways in Lewisham, for example, has a housing officer from a neighbouring borough and a council maintenance worker on its committee, Dixon Clark Court in Islington has a solicitor and an NHS manager, and Roupell Park in Lambeth has the former manager of Olympia Exhibition Centre as its chair and a former pensions administrator as treasurer.
- 4.66 Committee members interviewed were clear that theirs was the overall responsibility for setting policy and making major decisions and that the staff were responsible for implementing those decisions, advising the committee, and keeping them informed – and staff members interviewed in the case studies agreed. An illustration of this was provided in negotiations over access to case studies for the research: all the TMO staff contacted were clear that they could not agree to access without their TMO board taking a decision to participate in the study.
- 4.67 In a number of the case studies, board members were very actively involved in the day-to-day running of the TMO. At Alpha TMC in Sheffield, for example, where a housing manager is employed for 4 days a week, committee members cover the office on his day off each week. Even in some of the largest and best-staffed TMOs committee members choose to be involved on a daily basis. At Heath Town in Wolverhampton, for example, the chair and the treasurer both come into the office each day and are there from 9am to 4pm. This is possible because the members concerned are retired, but it also shows great personal commitment to the TMO and was not uncommon. This is a good way to keep in touch with the day-to-day business of the TMO, but it is important that a clear boundary is maintained between staff and board members' responsibilities to avoid misunderstandings and possible conflict.
- 4.68 In larger TMOs which employ a number of staff, the business of running them is necessarily much more complex than in smaller ones and more responsibility will be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer or Housing Manager. It is important that committees retain ultimate responsibility and governance over their affairs and their senior staff. With expansion this can become difficult. Heath Town EMB, recognising that board members

do not have the skills to provide appraisal and career development for the Chief Executive, has appointed an outside agency to carry out this part of its brief.

- 4.69 Knowing when to ask for help and advice, and being open to doing so, is a sign of a confident committee. One of the housing officers interviewed, said of the TMO in his area that they were now much more willing to ask for help with tenancy management problems and he interpreted this as a sign of maturity rather than weakness on the part of the committee.

## MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- 4.70 With notable exceptions, TMOs in both the case studies and the TMO survey were weak in formal performance reporting and consequently the collection of data on a consistent basis proved difficult. With the exception of relet times, most TMOs do not appear to collect Best Value performance data, in some cases because the data is not available, and in others because they cover areas outwith the TMO's responsibilities.
- 4.71 Collection of data and reporting of performance by TMOs appears to be related to the performance culture of the local authority. Local authorities with several TMOs were more likely to have introduced formal and regular monitoring, for example, Westminster, Lambeth and Walsall. Informal response from TMOs, as well as knowledge of the sector, support our findings that TMOs experience difficulties in reporting their performance on a wide range of indicators unless they are supported by the local authority in doing this, or they are well established with experienced staff and board members who appreciate the importance of reporting on and monitoring performance. It should be added that councils' retrieval of these documents for the researchers was also patchy.
- 4.72 However, some of the case study TMOs were doing well in this area. Grosvenor and Regency EMO, for example, were planning to produce performance reports for 2000–2001. A number of other TMOs made regular returns to their local authority.

**Good practice example:** Westminster City Council has formed a benchmarking group with 13 partner authorities and TMOs. The group is monitoring against best value performance and other indicators. There are peer group exercises with councils and TMOs visiting each others' TMOs and sharing reports.

**Good practice example:** Walsall MBC monitors TMOs in terms of equal opportunities, staffing, complaints, repairs, tenancy management and other key performance indicators on a regular basis.

## Relationship with the local authority

- 4.73 The relationship between the TMO and their local authority was widely perceived to be problematic. It was identified in the stakeholder interviews as one of the major problems faced by TMOs, and also emerged as one of the main problems in the TMO survey. The

case study interviews confirmed this view. Given that most TMOs begin out of a sense of frustration with the council as landlord, it is not perhaps surprising.

- 4.74 This was not universally the case; some of the TMOs had a very amicable relationship with their local authority, both at officer and councillor level. Turf Hill EMB in Rochdale was an example of this, where they had a very supportive chair of housing and a seconded housing officer to service the TMO. Admittedly, this was a TMO that currently has few management responsibilities and consequently perhaps fewer areas for potential conflict.

**Good practice example:** London Borough of Newham has standard forms and letters which are available on the council's intranet, and regularly updated for use by TMOs as well as their own staff.

- 4.75 In other case studies, TMO members' feelings about their local authority ranged from the luke-warm to the hostile. Distrust and suspicion seemed common, illustrated by the comment, "the council are like snakes: they either bite or hide from you". The reasons for this bad relationship are probably grounded in early bad experiences of the local authority as landlord, both in its neglect of estates in the first place and in its obstruction of tenants' plans to become a TMO. In many cases, committee members commented that relations had improved over time, but there were still problems. It appears that what can begin as an adversarial relationship can develop into something more amicable as TMOs mature and gain in confidence, and once local authorities have had time to observe a TMO in operation.
- 4.76 Some of those interviewed in TMOs made a distinction according to who they were dealing with. In Belle Isle, for example, senior officers and the local councillor were seen as supportive, with middle ranking staff more sceptical of tenants' abilities to manage their own estate.
- 4.77 One of the case study TMOs was in serious dispute with their local authority over a sum of money owed to them by the LA and in consequence had withheld payment of rent for over a year. In four out of the 16 established TMO case studies, the landlord had not signed the MMA and this seemed to indicate a basic lack of commitment on their part.
- 4.78 Common sources of disagreement included:
- **Re-organisation of local authorities** and the trend towards re-centralisation has not helped in terms of co-ordination and liaison. In several case studies, TMOs were left without a liaison officer.
  - **Allocations** – TMOs would like more say over this and feel that they have no choice over tenants. They get people who are not committed to living in a TMO and anti-social tenants who can be very difficult to deal with, especially for smaller TMOs. Councils feel that TMOs are reluctant to take homeless applicants or difficult tenants and want to be able to 'pick and choose'.
  - **Management allowances** – allowances are set too low; any surpluses made by the TMO are used to justify cuts in allowances in the following year; allowances are not set sufficiently far ahead to allow TMOs to plan properly.

- **Modular Management Agreements (MMA)** – the terms of the agreements are often ambiguous, for example, the difference between repairs, maintenance and capital works is not always clear and TMOs can end up paying for work that they think should be the council's responsibility.
- **Incompetence** – there was a common feeling among TMOs that many council officers were lacking in skills, both technical and financial. "The council can't seem to handle budgets. Fortunately we've turned it round. But now we are successful, they're intent on cutting the money down." (Board member)
- **Lack of liaison and understanding** of TMOs among local authority staff. TMOs were often exasperated that they had to explain themselves every time they rang the council. TMOs also commented that the council were obstructive to begin with and now that they were a success, wanted to claim the credit for them.

4.79 Interestingly, these negative views were not reciprocated by council officers who generally viewed the TMOs more positively. In one case, the committee members and worker in a TMO had talked at length about the lack of co-operation they experienced from their local authority and commented angrily that they had 'no relationship' with the council, while the liaison officer concerned said that he thought relations were 'quite good' and that there were no particular problems. One of the reasons for this discrepancy might be that council officers have a wide number of properties with which to deal and consequently perhaps have a wider perspective, whereas TMOs only have the local authority to focus upon. TMOs are also far more dependent on their councils than vice versa. Another factor may be that most of the council staff interviewed were tenant participation staff, not mainstream housing staff. TMOs experienced particular difficulties with the latter over the extent of retained responsibilities and, less frequently, lettings.

4.80 Attitudes towards TMOs among chairs of housing or cabinet members for housing on the local council varied considerably, as did their knowledge of them. Most had little detailed knowledge of the particular TMO under discussion, some had little detailed knowledge of TMOs in general, and more than a few did not know whether or not their council had a strategy or policy document for TMOs. However, some were better informed, and these were generally those with a TMO in their own wards. A few of the councillors interviewed were TMO board members.

4.81 Support, in some cases, guarded, was the keynote of councillors' response to TMOs, but a minority were very sceptical about them, either about the particular TMO in question or about TMOs in general. Criticisms revolved around:

- the resources used in supporting TMOs, both in terms of money and officer time;
- the perceived lack of good equal opportunities practice;
- the perceived low calibre of committee members and their capacity to run complex organisations;
- the fact that a property was lost each time a TMO was set up (for use as the office); this was difficult in areas of high demand, particularly where there were large numbers of TMOs.

- 4.82 The second and third points were not supported by research findings from the case studies while the first and fourth points need to be weighed against the broader long-term benefits achieved by TMOs. In addition, more than one third of local authorities are themselves performing poorly with respect to equal opportunities as they are still not following the CRE's Code of Practice for rented housing (Audit Commission, 2002).
- 4.83 In general, councillors tended to be more critical or sceptical than council staff about TMOs. On the other hand, some had a strong supportive relationship with the TMO, including active involvement on the board.
- 4.84 Hostility towards the council can have negative consequences if it leads to the TMO isolating itself from the consultative mechanisms of the council. One local authority officer interviewed commented that it was important for TMOs to develop strong links with the council, to participate in strategic issues with the council, to come to rent-setting consultations and to put themselves in a position where they are able to influence policy.
- 4.85 There is a question over whether a confrontational mode can be more productive for TMOs. Co-operation with the local authority can mean getting drawn into the council's agenda, which may distract members from the TMO's own priorities. One of the strongest TMOs in the study had taken its council to arbitration right at the beginning over the level of management allowance set. The TMO won the case and had a considerable back payment made to them. As Somerville found in his research into TMOs, "a tenant group sufficiently united in purpose, with continuity of membership and confident in its dealings with the local authority could prevail even with an unco-operative local authority" (Somerville et al, 1998, p.46).

## Sustainability

**Indicator 11: Number of unfilled seats on the board**

**Indicator 12: Level of funding provided for ongoing training of committee members**

**Indicator 13: Average number of hours a week contributed by board members to TMO work**

- 4.86 That TMOs provide a successful structure is demonstrated by the fact that very few fail, and that when tenants are re-balloted, they do not vote to return to the council. The TMOs studied were generally well-run organisations that had succeeded in turning struggling estates around and making them more attractive places in which to live. Generally, they were also very positive about their achievements, few felt they had failed in any significant way, and most were confident about the future. The TMO survey revealed a small number of TMOs that were in trouble, and a few that had failed in the past, but these were a small percentage of the overall number. However, in order to be sustainable, TMOs need to give thought to maintaining stock, systems and membership. This involves planning, development and training.

## COMMITTEES

- 4.87 Despite the general confidence in the future expressed by board members in the case studies, most experienced considerable problems in recruiting new members. The TMO survey showed that this was a general problem. More than half of the case study TMOs had

vacant seats on their committees although some were seats available for co-option. Not all the case studies had problems maintaining their boards. Five Ways, Springs TMC and Carlton Vale RMO, for example, had no vacancies on their boards.

- 4.88 It is possible that in the first flush of enthusiasm, larger committees than were necessary were set up and that active membership has now reduced to a more realistic number. There was also no evidence among the case study TMOs that board members were about to give up or that any of the TMOs were in danger of folding through lack of support. (Indeed, in one TMO, 7 out of the 8 original members had died, but new members had come forward to replace them). There was exasperation at the lack of tenant involvement, and a certain amount of resentment at this, but no one expressed fears that their TMO would not be able carry on functioning and indeed most were actively planning for the future.
- 4.89 For the majority of TMOs that do experience problems with recruitment, however, there are implications for their future viability. Several factors were identified which may contribute to this problem:
- it is not the norm for people to volunteer their time to run their housing. The people who do so are exceptional;
  - TMO activists often came together originally as a result of a campaign, eg over poor repairs, Estate Action, Tenants Choice, and without this initial impulse it is difficult for tenants to be motivated. It is also difficult for newcomers to join an already established group. In most, but not all of the case study TMOs, the majority of the key committee members have been involved from the beginning;
  - in smaller TMOs, the pool of potential members is limited. One of the case study TMOs with just over 50 units said that there were only about 30 potential committee members in the scheme;
  - residualisation – the changing role of social housing (Forrest and Murie, 1990) means that the potential pool of skilled, experienced, committed tenants coming forward to take on committee responsibilities is likely to be shrinking. Local authority council tenants are also becoming increasingly elderly and while elderly people are often the backbone of committees, their contribution is unsustainable over the long-term;
  - a number of the case study TMOs thought that their LAs were not contributing to their viability as they were sending them tenants who at the least do not make suitable committee members, and at the worst are disruptive to the community.
- 4.90 Reliance on a small number of committee members can put a lot of pressure on individuals and result in burn-out. Unless other people come forward to get involved, the future of some TMOs is by no means assured.
- 4.91 Clearly, thought needs to be given to the recruitment of new members. One strategy which seemed to be relatively neglected was co-option. Co-option offers a useful means of bringing members of hard to reach and under-represented groups onto boards. It could be a way forward for TMOs that would both widen representation and bring new skills and expertise onto their boards. Another possibility is shadowing or mentoring where potential new recruits can see what is involved, decide whether it is for them and gain confidence.

- 4.92 In the residents survey, 8% of tenants and 9% of leaseholders and owners said that they were likely to become more involved in the TMO. This indicates that there is some potential for widening involvement within established TMOs.

## **STOCK**

- 4.93 A number of case study TMOs were coping with pre-war stock, or tower blocks, that had been poorly maintained over the years. One had a serious problem with voids because of the nature of its stock – high-rise blocks and asbestos – and the reputation of the area. In the short term, they were filling some of their vacancies with asylum seekers and overseas nurses, but in the long term this was not a solution. It was estimated that £20m was needed to bring the stock up to standard and this was unlikely to be forthcoming.
- 4.94 In estates that had received Estate Action funding, their stock was generally in very good condition and in little need of expenditure. Alpha TMC, for example, had £70,000 spent on each of its properties in the early 1990s and there was little problem in letting them.

## **ALLOCATIONS**

- 4.95 Giving TMOs a greater say in allocations may help to build their sustainability by ensuring that new tenants are positively interested in living in such a scheme and can contribute to it. This is perhaps difficult in areas of high demand, as people who are desperate for housing are likely to say that they want to live in a TMO – whether or not they do – in order to get housed.
- 4.96 There is also a trade-off to be made with meeting the wider needs of the local authority to house homeless households or those with multiple problems. Some of the council officers interviewed emphasised the need for TMOs to take their share of this group and to take on housing management ‘warts and all’. Committee members in more than one of the case studies, however, felt that their councils were not only nominating tenants who were not interested in living in a TMO but were ‘sabotaging’ them by sending them unsuitable tenants. Some reported that although they interviewed prospective tenants, they had no power of veto over them and that the local authority ignored their views.
- 4.97 Some councils were more proactive in attracting tenants and promoting TMOs: Lewisham, for example, has adopted a policy of contacting everyone who ticked the ‘interested in a co-op’ box to tell them more.

## **TRAINING**

- 4.98 Training is also an important element of sustainability, for new and existing members. It can keep people up to date with new legislation and developments, put them in touch with other people in the field, and also sustain their interest over the long term.
- 4.99 It is uncertain the part Section 16 training plays in determining the sustainability of a TMO. Most case study TMOs expressed general satisfaction with the process, some were very enthusiastic and a few very disappointed. SMART, one of the TMO case studies in

development, thought that their training agency was “brilliant”, Heath Town TMO members were impressed by the training they received, especially as they had one dedicated trainer who moved on to the estate for the development process. Other TMOs were not so impressed and one had sacked their original training agency and made other arrangements with an individual trainer. There was a general feeling that it would be useful to have some guidance on how to select a development agency, and also to have further input into training and support after the formal period of training came to an end.

- 4.100 A lack of ongoing training was one of the problem areas identified in stakeholder interviews and several of the case study interviewees commented on the sudden cessation of training when the development process came to an end. In the words of one TMO member “a big black hole opens up after the development process”.
- 4.101 In most of the case study TMOs, funding for ongoing training, or training for new members, did not seem to be much of a priority post-development and there was a general vagueness over budgets. However, some of the case study TMOs were very aware of the importance of training, several mentioned attending events and courses at Trafford Hall (the Tenants’ Resource Centre) on a regular basis and Heath Town EMB, one of the biggest TMOs in the study, had £10,000 per annum earmarked for training.
- 4.102 TMOs receive £20 per property for committee costs to cover training, but some use it as part of their general repairs budget rather than for training. Clear guidance, and monitoring, is needed here to ensure that the money is used appropriately. The sum received could also be adjusted to the size of the TMO in order to ensure that smaller organisations receive a realistic amount.

**Good practice example:** Heath Town EMB offers new committee members 6 months training working on the subcommittees before joining the main board.

## FUTURE PLANNING

- 4.103 Many of the case studies had plans for the future, including applying for the Right to Manage in the case of existing EMBs; taking on additional responsibilities and additional properties; or moving towards RSL status. A number of interviewees expressed the view that to ensure sustainability, it was important for their TMO “not to stand still”. Forward planning, actively seeking out new avenues for development and positively planning for the future are all signs of dynamic organisations.

**Good practice example:** Belle Isle has a weekend at Northern College each year for staff and committee to review the direction in which they need to go, and a number of other of the case study TMOs had ‘away-days’ for the same purpose.

## COSTS AND BENEFITS TO ACTIVISTS

- 4.104 Every TMO visited was characterised by the pride of the committee members in their achievements, their enthusiasm for the goals of the project and their commitment to their

communities. Committee members generally felt positive about the experience of being involved in their TMO, none of the people we interviewed said they regretted it or they would not do it again, but all emphasised the hard work and sometimes thankless nature of TMO work.

- 4.105 Among the benefits most commonly cited was the feeling of being useful, of doing something that benefited the community. Retired people said that it gave them something to do with their time and a number of committee members commented on the sociability and friendships generated by being involved over time. Also mentioned as benefits were being in control of their neighbourhoods, having an improved environment in which to live and the pride which could be taken in that.
- 4.106 Some committee members were already skilled and capable people, but many acknowledged a general increase in confidence and a pride in the skills acquired, e.g. managing meetings, planning and design, doing accounts, and learning IT. As discussed earlier, few went on to exploit these skills elsewhere, but in some cases the skills acquired had fed into people's work-lives and enabled them to apply for other jobs. At one TMO, the committee member with responsibility for staffing had gone on to work in the field of employment and clearly there was a reciprocal benefit for the TMO here. A number of committee members were also involved in other council committees as representatives of their TMOs and some were active in national networks such as ATIC and the National Federation of TMOs.
- 4.107 In terms of costs, time was the factor most commonly mentioned. Be prepared 'for a long hard slog' was the advice offered by one of the TMOs in the survey to groups thinking of taking up tenant management. It takes a lot of hard work to set up a TMO and a lot of work to keep it going and great commitment is needed. One committee member commented wryly on always missing Coronation Street, another on her kids always getting baked beans for tea, another that it took hours to go to the shop or to walk her dog as people kept stopping her to ask her things. Wear and tear on domestic life is clearly a part of TMO involvement, but on the whole this did not seem to be resented. What was resented by committee members was 'tenant apathy' and the view that people only appeared when they wanted to moan. There was also a sense of exasperation with 'tenant dependency' and a perception that people expected you to do everything for them.
- 4.108 Some instances of harassment and abuse were reported but this was not common. One TMO mentioned a past committee member leaving because of the stress of dealing with tenancy management problems. What particularly riled some people was being confused with the council, being accused of being council spies or the assumption that they were being paid.
- 4.109 Board members in the case studies were asked to keep time sheets over a two week period. From the limited number of returns, a wide range of time commitment emerged from 3.5 to 33.5 hours a week among chairs and between 2.5 and 27.5 hours per week among ordinary board members. Most of those who responded were office holders: their average input was more than 13 hours per week on TMO matters. While these results are not statistically reliable or representative, they do indicate the considerable amounts of time that some tenants are investing in tenant management on a voluntary basis.

Other threats to sustainability raised were:

- over-reliance on one key worker, especially in small TMOs, as there could be delays and difficulty in replacing them;
- the Right to Buy and the increasing diversity of tenures on formerly exclusively council estates may present problems for the future;
- large scale voluntary transfer: the Right to Manage is not automatically preserved under transfer. TMOs are fearful that they may disappear in transfers and the future here seems very uncertain;
- TMOs' role may be superseded by other regeneration initiatives.

## Staffing and employment

### **Indicator 14: Level of staff turnover**

- 4.110 Employment was identified as the most problematic area of TMO practice in the stakeholder interviews; TMOs were perceived as having high staff turnover, poor terms and conditions of service, and a disproportionate number of employment tribunals.
- 4.111 In fact we found that the case study TMOs generally had low staff turnover and good relations between committee members and staff. This is possibly because they had all been in existence for a few years and had learned good employment skills. One board member with responsibility for staffing commented that while they had had 3 managers in their first three years 'each one was better than the last' and their present manager had been in post for 2½ years and looked set to stay. Another commented that their staff never left because of job dissatisfaction, but only to go to better jobs.
- 4.112 A number of case studies reported difficulties with staffing in their early days that had subsequently been resolved. In one case, the council had stepped in and temporarily taken back the management of the TMO because of the difficulty they were experiencing, and this was clearly a helpful and supportive act. The council officer involved commented that the development training does not equip TMOs adequately with staff management skills.
- 4.113 TMO members of staff interviewed generally reported good relations with their committee and great job satisfaction. Workers liked the lack of bureaucracy, the close contact with tenants and the feeling that they just 'get on with things'. In some cases, TMOs had attracted staff from the local authority: the Management Services Officer at Springs, for example, was previously a housing worker for Bury MBC.
- 4.114 Staff in seconded posts felt equally positive about the experience, but for some there was an issue of divided loyalties, "the board see me as working for them and I can't always get the best for them because I'm working for the council". Equally boards can be concerned not to get seconded staff into trouble with their line managers. Some workers prefer secondment because of the greater security and career prospects of the employment by the council.

- 4.115 There is a problem with career development for staff, especially marked in smaller TMOs. In some cases TMOs had attracted very dedicated staff who were not interested in moving elsewhere, e.g. Cottington Close, Glebe Gardens, The Avenues, while others were working for a TMO while pursuing further training eg Dixon Clark Court. One council officer interviewed said that generally working for TMOs was seen as “going out on a limb” and that there was a fear of losing continuous service benefits if one did so. There were mixed views among staff about whether or not TMO experience advanced their career prospects. London is exceptional as it has a large number and wide range of TMOs and staff can progress by moving to larger TMOs.
- 4.116 Most case study TMOs saw training as important for their workers, but it seemed difficult for workers in the smaller TMOs to get away to take advantage of training opportunities.

**Good practice example:** Heath Town in Wolverhampton is paying for the Chief Executive to do an MBA, with an option in neighbourhood management, and is also funding staff to do accredited courses. Three concierges have completed the CIH National Certificate in Concierge and Caretaking.

**Good practice example:** Some neighbouring TMOs have organised reciprocal arrangements for sick leave and annual leave; in Westminster a retired TMO administrator is available as a locum. These schemes could be extended to cover absences caused by training.

- 4.117 Terms and conditions of employment varied between TMOs. In some they were equivalent to those offered by the local authority, although the pension scheme may have been different. In others, they were inferior with some workers getting no pension contributions paid, lower pay and less holiday entitlement.
- 4.118 Few of the case study TMOs employed tenants and there were mixed views on the wisdom of this. Some board members were in favour as they saw it providing local employment and a more accessible workforce. Others were concerned that it put workers under pressure from their neighbours and that if they lost their jobs they would be in a very awkward position.
- 4.119 Few of the TMO staff interviewed had formal housing qualifications, but most were from housing backgrounds.

## Openness, diversity and inclusiveness

**Indicator 15: Adherence to CRE’s Code of Practice for rented housing (BVPI)**

**Indicator 16: Gender and age balance of board members**

- 4.120 All the TMO case studies had some form of equal opportunities policy in place although some were unsure about whether or not the CRE’s Code of Practice for rented housing was being adhered to. This echoed findings from the TMO survey. It may be that TMOs, by virtue of being agents of the landlord, are already covered by the CRE Code of Practice, but committee members and staff need to know this.

- 4.121 Most of the case study boards or committees had a majority of women members. Four of them had three or more black or minority ethnic residents on their boards. There were exceptions to this pattern, Five Ways TMC, for example, had equal numbers of men and women on its committee and a quarter of its members were black or ethnic minority.
- 4.122 Most board members tend to be aged 40 or older, with a higher proportion of elderly office-holders – partly because they are most likely to have the time available for the higher levels of involvement required for the posts of chair, secretary and treasurer. Equally, council tenants are disproportionately elderly in comparison with the general population, as are elected members on local authorities (Wilson and Game, 1998).
- 4.123 Given the lack of demographic profiles of case study populations, it is not possible to know to what extent committee membership reflected the age, gender or ethnic profile of residents. In terms of ethnicity, some TMOs had very diverse populations; Heath Town EMB, for example, estimated that 33 different languages were spoken on the estate, and while black and minority ethnic members were represented on the board, it would be difficult to represent all these different groups. Other TMOs appeared to have very homogenous white populations and the lack of black and minority ethnic group representation was an accurate representation of the estate.
- 4.124 The apparent lack of proportionate representation in some of the case study TMOs seems to be part of the general difficulty of getting any tenants involved, rather than an exclusion issue. When TMO members and workers were asked whether they could identify any ‘hard to reach’ groups on the estate, most replied ‘all of them’. However, when particular groups were mentioned, these included young men, young mothers, and members of minority ethnic groups.
- 4.125 It is worth noting the results of the residents survey here. More than three quarters of tenants (78%) and leaseholders/owner occupiers (76%) agreed that their TMO was representative of the people who live there; and more than three quarters of tenants (78%) and leaseholders/owner occupiers (77%) agreed that the TMO treats all types of people fairly. A higher proportion of black and minority ethnic survey respondents agreed that their TMO was representative of the people who live there (82%) and treats all types of people fairly (84%), than the overall average. Although based on a small sample, these results provide evidence of the perceived openness of TMOs among all members of their community.
- 4.126 It is probably unrealistic to expect young people to get involved in housing management, and undertaking time-consuming voluntary work is unusual for all age-groups. National research shows that it is the 65-74 age group who are most active in voluntary work, putting in an average of 4.9 hours a week (National Centre for Volunteering, cited in *The Guardian*, 20 August 2001). It is this age group that has the most time and perhaps the most commitment to their areas. Those interviewed in the case studies had often lived there for all their adult lives and brought up their children there. One council officer said of the TMO in his area, that while the committee members may not have been representative of the tenants in the demographic sense, they were still able to represent their interests because they know the estate and the issues.
- 4.127 In all the case studies, new tenants were told about the TMO and invited to join, and strenuous attempts were made to increase their participation and make them feel welcome.

**Good practice example:** Applegarth House offers £5 per hour for childcare expenses to enable people to attend meetings.

**Good practice example:** Five Ways TMC pays for the translation of important documents into other languages.

**Good practice example:** Turf Hill EMB, recognising that more Asian tenants are moving onto the estate, has made special efforts to include them in outings.

**Good practice example:** Heath Town EMB has organised English language classes for asylum seeker tenants and encouraged their participation on the committee.

**Good practice example:** Springs TMC actively involves children and young people through gardening projects, a youth football team and social activities.

## Tenant information and participation

### **Indicator 17: Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities for participation in management and decision-making (BVPI) and means by which this is established**

- 4.128 Closely related to issues of openness and inclusivity are those of tenant participation and information and many of the same points apply. The residents survey provides a striking contrast with the SEH 99/00 data on tenants' satisfaction with the opportunities to be involved in the management of their homes: 77% of the case study TMO tenants compared with 49% of SEH council tenants were satisfied or very satisfied. These results represent a significant difference between TMO tenants and the mass of council tenants. It provides some measure of the degree to which they feel empowered, whether or not they take advantage of the opportunity to be actively involved.
- 4.129 TMOs represent the greatest degree of tenant involvement in social housing, and yet tenant participation was one of the areas identified as a problem in stakeholder interviews, the TMO survey and the case studies. All the TMOs reported difficulty in getting tenants involved: few took up the opportunity to attend committee meetings or AGMs, few put themselves forward as committee members and elections were not contested. Committee members characterised this as 'tenant apathy' or, more positively, as a sign that tenants were satisfied with the services provided. Possibly, in smaller TMOs, because the estate is small and compact, the office convenient and the committee members visible around the estate, much communication takes place informally and tenants do not feel the need to become more involved.
- 4.130 Most of the case study TMOs had subcommittees in which non-committee members could get involved. These included a wide range of topics, but most frequently mentioned were repairs, finance, allocations, and gardening. However, interviews with the committee

members showed that it was generally the main committee members who were on the subcommittees, so that very often the same few people were running everything. Most TMOs also have opportunities for tenant involvement outside the formal structures through, for example, gardening and social activities, or just dropping in for a chat.

- 4.131 It should be remembered that it is exceptional for people to get involved in community activities and that nearly all community and voluntary groups find it hard to attract active members. Nic Bliss of the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH) commented that:

*“Provided there are no barriers to tenants attending AGMs (provided they are quorate) and standing for elections what does it matter? The importance of TMOs and other tenant-controlled organisations is that all residents should have a democratic right to participate (which includes ensuring that there are no barriers) whether they choose to participate or not is up to individuals. The reality in any community is that there will be a comparatively small number of people who are the core activists.”*

(Stakeholder interviews, 2001)

- 4.132 Continuation ballots had achieved high turnouts, with figures ranging from 55% upwards. As a number of committee members pointed out, this compares favourably with local election turn-outs (35% nationally in 2002), indicating higher levels of engagement.

## INFORMATION

- 4.133 TMO tenants were more likely to agree that the TMO was good at keeping them informed on things affecting them than council tenants in the SEH 99/00 survey (82% compared with 78%). Most of the case study TMOs produced newsletters although they were sometimes rather sporadic. These varied from glossy and professional-looking publications to a one-side information sheet. The quality depended heavily on the IT skills of committee members or staff, but some were very impressive with colour photographs and illustrations. Newsletters also provided a forum for tenants – for letters, small ads and sometimes poetry. The presence of a local estate office also provides an accessible and usually less formal forum for dissemination of information to estate residents.

**Good practice example:** Carlton Vale RMO produces large-print communications for the benefit of its elderly or poor-sighted tenants.

**Good practice example:** Roupell Park gives news of its activities in its monthly newsletter and invites people to get involved and to join the committee.

**Good practice example:** Alpha TMC produces a simple, easy-to-read introductory leaflet for new tenants setting out what the TMO does and how it works.

## Community activities and capacity building

**Indicator 18: Evidence of board members going on to further education/training/employment and other public office**

**Indicator 19: Number and type of non-housing management staff employed**

**Indicator 20: Level of progress towards achieving original aims**

- 4.134 The extent to which particular TMOs get involved in community activities, or focus mainly on housing management, varies according to the role the TMO committee feels appropriate; the size of the TMO (small ones tend to be less active in this area and this is a reflection of the money and the people available) and the area in which they are situated. An inner-city TMO, for example, will generally be well served with amenities and services already. Applegarth House in Southwark, for example, is in within minutes walk of the Blackfriars Community Settlement, various tube stations, the Old Vic and Tate Modern.
- 4.135 Most of the case study TMOs were active, to a greater or lesser degree, in social or community activities. This corresponded with the findings of the TMO survey of a wide variation in the degree of TMO involvement in social and community activities, but with a majority taking part in activities outside the modular management agreement. Most of the case study TMOs organised social events for tenants and many provided play facilities. Some TMOs provided an ambitious range of community activities and facilities for their tenants: Heath Town EMB in Wolverhampton and Springs TMC in Bury, for example, two TMOs with difficult stock to manage and let, both have outstanding community programmes. Two other case study TMOs had been involved in intermediate labour market schemes; Grosvenor and Regency EMO had obtained funding for a DJ mixing unit and an IT resource centre and for the refurbishment of the tenants hall as a cultural resource centre for ethnic minority residents. A number of TMOs ran IT courses for tenants and at Turf Hill EMB board members knew of at least four tenants who had gained employment after taking part in computing training.
- 4.136 Among the case study TMOs, there was often an overlap between the TMO and the local tenants and residents association. At Turf Hill, for example, the EMB is based in the Turf Hill Initiatives Centre, the centre runs a host of activities for the estate and members of both committees seem to be identical. This is not surprising as activists in an area are likely to be involved in a range of issues and the overlap between housing and community activities shows a holistic view of the neighbourhood and its needs.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 4.137 Committee members interviewed in the case studies generally felt that they had grown in skills and confidence – although some were very skilled already – but few reported that they had gone on to use the experience gained elsewhere. This was partly because many of the members had retired, but mostly because this was not their motivation in getting involved. “Transferable skills go into community rather than career or committee” (Regional workshop). It was also commented at one of the research workshops that the time demanded by TMOs might restrict involvement in other activities.

4.138 There were some exceptions to this:

- At Belle Isle EMB two members had gone onto university degrees, some had taken the National Certificate in Tenant Participation and skills have been transferred to other voluntary organisations.
- At Alpha, a committee member had gone on to study housing management.
- One of the original board members at Digmoor EMB was now the local authority tenant participation officer; while others had gone into work after long-term unemployment.
- At Turf Hill one of the Board members has become a local councillor and another a school governor.

4.139 Whether or not individual members go on to greater things, the cumulative effect of running their own affairs and the opportunities to get involved may have subtle and long-term effects in boosting the confidence and capacity of tenants. At Alpha TMC, for example, committee members have talked to housing students at the local University and two committee members have become members of the Area Housing Committee. Other TMOs have representation on stock transfer consultations and other local authority committees and participation in such forums undoubtedly contributes to a neighbourhood's feeling of involvement and inclusion.

4.140 In a number of case studies, involvement in the TMO had helped individual board members overcome personal loss and isolation, while others interviewed had gained satisfaction from getting to know their neighbours and others. Building community spirit was frequently cited as an achievement by board members in the case studies and in the TMO survey. It was something the committee members interviewed commented on as an important and satisfying outcome of their work.

## **NON-HOUSING MANAGEMENT STAFF**

4.141 A number of the larger case study TMOs employed workers for non-housing projects, in most cases funded by other bodies, or seconded. Grosvenor and Regency had obtained funding for a part-time youth worker, Belle Isle had four project workers, two working with young residents to improve their independent living skills and two working on a burglary-prevention initiative. Heath Town employed the most non-housing workers: an employment resource manager, an employment officer, a café manager and assistants, a nursery manager and assistant, a sports centre manager and assistants, a community health manager and three asylum seeker workers. Among the smaller TMOs, Springs TMC with 335 properties, had employed a community development worker to work with local residents and agencies.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS AIMS

- 4.142 In terms of progress towards original aims, all but one of the case studies appeared to be making good progress towards their original goals – this was very much the view of board members. In one case, interviewees felt that the TMO had far exceeded its original aims, providing a powerful argument for the benefits of “not standing still”.

**Good practice example:** Digmoor and Heath Town EMBs are involved in running food co-ops.

**Good practice example:** Springs TMO is involved in youth and community work and providing educational courses in conjunction with Bury College.

## Partnership working, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal

**Indicator 21: Evidence of partnerships/links with other organisations**

**Indicator 22: Evidence of success in leveraging in money from the local authority and non-local authority sources**

- 4.143 Again, there is some overlap between this topic and the last and it is difficult to separate out community activities from regeneration and renewal activities.
- 4.144 Among the case study TMOs, the larger ones, not surprisingly were more active in making links with other organisations and building partnerships, than the smaller TMOs. Some, such as The Avenues in Walsall and Springs in Bury, had been successful in accessing regeneration funds, others reported a number of failed attempts to access regeneration and other funds, after which they had lost heart. This was more problematic for small TMOs as they could not generate surpluses nor attract the funding to develop posts and projects. Applying for grants is a complex business and both tenants and staff need training and support to do this effectively.
- 4.145 Several case study TMOs were working in partnership with other organisations, in some instances securing sponsorship, equipment and funds; in other cases, TMOs were represented on the committees of local bodies. The TMO survey found that, in addition to community activities, 24% of TMOs were involved in SRBs and 21% in youth work. TMOs are sometimes eligible for funding that would not be available to local authorities.

**Good practice example:** Turf Hill EMB has developed good links with the local beat officer and the head teacher of the local school in order to offer support to children and families who may be under stress.

- 4.146 There was variation in the degree of success with which TMOs had been able to lever in additional funds, reflecting to some extent the skills, contacts and experience of both members and staff. Some were very entrepreneurial in their approach and had succeeded in

building up a wide range of links and partnerships. For example, one estate manager was regarded as very good at finding pockets of money within the local authority for TMO projects; while in another TMO, the negotiating skills of the chairman resulted in the TMO obtaining free TV equipment from a private company. Success in this area may also reflect the willingness of local agencies to work with TMOs.

**Good practice example:** Heath Town EMB has obtained funding from a number of sources: SRB and Sports Lottery funding for its Sports Centre, ERDF funding for its Employment Resource Centre and BT funding for its IT suite. Heath Town has also been active in initiating links with a range of LA departments, Leisure, Youth, Sports, Education, with the aim of achieving real neighbourhood management.

- 4.147 Knowledge of the local area and of the tenant population is essential if local needs and gaps in provision are to be identified. Part of the tenant management training entails carrying out a survey of the local area and a number of the case studies had continued and developed this. Turf Hill, for example, has carried out a door-to-door survey of tenants and Heath Town has carried out a number of surveys, including a skills audit of tenants.
- 4.148 Some of the case study TMOs were very active in networking with other TMOs and other tenant bodies and this seemed a useful way of gathering ideas and sharing information.

**Good practice example:** Five Ways TMC was instrumental in setting up a local TMO network in Lewisham.

**Good practice example:** SMART were founder members of the Carlisle and Rural Tenant Federation.

## Security

- Indicator 23: Evidence of a reduction in vandalism/criminal damage/graffiti per annum**
- 4.149 A sense of security is important to all residents and reducing crime was a high priority for the case study TMOs. Most had taken measures to combat crime and a number had turned their estates around from no-go areas to safe places to live. Board members from the Avenues said that before the TMO, police would not come onto the estate, and members at Five Ways said that previously neither the post office would deliver letters, nor taxi-drivers collect or drop off in their estate. Among the problems contended with by the case study TMOs were drugs, break-ins, attacks, prostitution, vandalism and general intimidation of the area by gangs or particular families.
- 4.150 TMOs responded with measures such as the installation of CCTV, extra lighting and security doors. Instant removal of graffiti and repair to damage caused by vandalism was also something that TMOs did well and this was effective in keeping up the appearance and morale of the estate. Heath Town EMB has succeeded in getting a police sub-station established on the estate and Digmaor EMB has a system of community wardens and

confidential police surgeries in place. Turf Hill, having previously been a problem area, now has one of the lowest crime rates in Rochdale.

- 4.151 Over and above these practical measures, TMOs felt that they had succeeded in creating more responsible and cohesive communities that wished to protect their estates from crime and the consequent bad reputation. Roupell Park RMC, for example said that there was more reporting of crime than before and that people were “more vigilant, more interested”.
- 4.152 A number of TMOs said that problems with damage and graffiti were worse in the summer holidays when the children were around, and in some cases play schemes were set up to keep the children occupied. Often most of the crime and security problems were attributed to people from off the estate, teenagers hanging around, for example, or using the estate as a short cut.

**Good practice example:** The Avenues installed identislots to allow the elderly to check identity cards before opening their doors.

## Barriers to, and lessons for, increasing levels of tenant management

- 4.153 Interviewees identified a number of factors that acted as possible barriers to increasing tenant management and various suggestions were made as to how they could be overcome.
- The most obvious barrier appears to be simple lack of knowledge of the possibility of becoming a TMO. This is something which could be tackled by increased publicity on the part of the ODPM, local authorities, the National Federation of TMOs and other tenant bodies. TMO activists could also play a role here.
  - Poor networking was a factor that emerged from the workshops held to discuss the research findings. Some of the participants had never heard of the various tenant organisations and had never attended a conference or got together with other TMO activists before. Steps that might help here include setting up a directory and data-base of TMOs, having a national TMO newsletter and holding more conferences, especially at a regional level.
  - The dwindling pool of potential activists for TMOs also emerged as a source of concern. This is something that is beyond the control of local, or voluntary, bodies, but more flexible allocation policies might help here. Local authorities could promote TMOs to housing applicants, transfers into the estate could be allowed for tenants from other areas interested in living in a TMO and arrangements made to enable TMO members to stay on the estate if their housing needs change.
  - The attitude of the local authority could also act as a barrier to new TMOs being set up. Some of the established TMOs reported that their local authority had been unco-operative to the point of obstruction at the beginning of the process. Suggestions

made to improve this included joint training for tenants and council officers and councillors and ‘more teeth’ for the ODPM to enforce co-operation from councils.

- There is a great deal of uncertainty over large-scale voluntary transfer and its implications for the future of TMOs. Incipient TMOs are not going to start down the long road of training and development, if their future under a new landlord is not guaranteed. Clear guidance is needed here from the ODPM and the Housing Corporation as to the position of existing TMOs in stock transfers and the rights of existing tenants who, at a later date may wish to take over the management of their homes. The proposed Walsall transfer provides a model: the offer document to tenants includes preservation of the Right to Manage by contract.

## Leaseholder/owner occupier issues

- 4.154 The increasing diversity of tenure on formerly exclusively local authority estates, particularly in London, may present problems for the sustainability of TMOs as the number of council tenants falls. Paradoxically, the better the management of the TMO, the more attractive the estate becomes as a place to live and the higher the number of Right to Buys. A high proportion of Right to Buys in a TMO has financial implications for its management and maintenance allowances that could ultimately make a TMO unviable. Where numbers of council tenants are dwindling, TMOs may have to reduce staff hours as their allowances are correspondingly reduced.
- 4.155 Some TMOs reported increases in the number of Right to Buys in their estates and some had a corresponding increase in the number of leaseholders on their committees. The case studies were evenly balanced between those with disproportionately high numbers of leaseholders and owner occupiers on their boards and those with disproportionately low numbers, given the number of Right to Buys on the estate. No clear relationship emerged between leaseholding and active involvement in TMOs, however problems were experienced in some of the case studies (see below).
- 4.156 While most committees had a majority of tenants as members, one Westminster TMO responding to the survey appeared to be composed exclusively of leaseholders and another, in Islington, had 7 out of 9. This is not necessarily a problem; as Nic Bliss of the CCH points out, “legally leaseholders are defined as tenants and provided there are no barriers to other people getting involved one shouldn’t throw stones at people who choose to do so”. However, a number of potential conflicts of interest were mentioned:
- service charges, for example, leaseholders may be reluctant to agree to works which tenants want done because of the implications for their service charges;
  - decisions about the use of surpluses where these will only benefit tenants;
  - subletting – leaseholders on some estates were subletting their properties. This means that TMOs often have no idea who the new tenants are, and that these new private tenants do not and can not get involved in the TMO, thereby reducing the pool of potential activists.

## Conclusions

- 4.157 Overall, the in-depth investigation of eighteen TMOs showed a diverse, but flourishing sector. The majority were performing well on housing management functions, were generally well-run organisations, and a number had gone considerably beyond their original remit to develop community and social activities and facilities for their tenants. The issues that emerged as problematic were monitoring and evaluation, the relationship with the local authority and tenant participation. The first, though important, is probably not the main priority for most TMOs, the second was important and made a great deal of difference to the experience of tenant management, although in some cases opposition from the local authority stiffened the resolve of the tenants. The third issue, lack of tenant participation, was of great concern to committee members and has implications for the future sustainability of the sector.
- 4.158 Many of the features that might make TMOs sustainable are beyond the remit of the TMO, for example, a balance of different types of housing and households, the existence of local jobs and opportunities and certainty about the future of council housing in relation to stock transfer. Given the large number of changes in local authority housing management structures and organisation since the early 90's, TMOs have proved to be a relatively stable and resilient organisational form.

# CHAPTER 5

## Conclusions

- 5.01 The preceding chapters have set out the findings of the study. This chapter draws the different parts of the research together, to address the aims identified in Chapter 1. The final chapter, Chapter 6 sets out our recommendations for good practice, emerging from the research and feedback obtained in the regional workshops.
- 5.02 Studying the case study TMOs highlighted the extent to which TMOs vary in terms of size, area, activities, aims and history, and the consequent difficulties of meaningful comparison. The case studies were carefully selected to achieve a good cross-section, but to a certain degree, they can only be representative of themselves. In addition, not all of those initially approached agreed to take part in the study. It seems probable that poorly performing TMOs would not have agreed to be case studies: to this extent, the picture may be a partial one. Lastly, although many of the findings reinforce the conclusions of earlier studies (Price Waterhouse, 1995, Somerville et al, 98, Tunstall, 2001), the research presents a snapshot of what is a constantly evolving and dynamic sector.

### Success in terms of TMO objectives

- 5.03 In terms of their main objectives: improving repairs and overall housing management performance, TMOs appear to be doing better than their host local authorities: in many cases, they compare favourably with the top 25% of local authorities in England. They provide residents with an opportunity to have more say and greater control over their environment. Some have achieved dramatic transformations, while others have made more modest progress. Both the TMO survey and evidence from the case studies support the conclusion that TMOs are successful in terms of their own objectives.

### Governance, accountability and sustainability

- 5.04 There has been some scepticism, mainly among housing professionals, about the governance and accountability of TMOs. The results of the research indicate that TMOs take governance and accountability seriously. Some may wish to review the size of their boards and look towards greater use of co-option to widen representation and strengthen particular areas of expertise. Overall, they work hard to be accountable and encourage participation, and are perceived as such by the majority of residents.
- 5.05 While the strength of TMOs is their flexibility and freedom from bureaucracy, better monitoring of performance is needed. There is little information easily available to make comparisons about relative performance at the estate level for either local authorities or

TMOs. Without wishing to over-burden TMOs with requirements for data collection, some basic performance data is needed both for TMOs, TMO residents and local authorities. Most TMOs will require advice and support in improving their monitoring data.

- 5.06 Sustainability is an area of concern. Although case study TMOs were optimistic about their futures and many planned to increase their responsibilities or the area covered, the difficulty of recruiting new, active members was frequently mentioned. The residualisation of council housing, and falling demand for council homes in some areas, threatens the long-term success of some TMOs. High numbers of Right to Buy sales may diminish allowances to unviable levels, and sub-letting of leasehold properties has reduced the supply of potentially active members in some TMOs. On the other hand, the involvement of leaseholders in some TMOs has injected new blood and new skills onto their boards. Flexibility in allocations has also contributed to the development of sustainable TMOs in more sustainable communities.
- 5.07 An area for further research is the extent to which the establishment of a TMO reduces turnover and stabilises communities.

## Problems and barriers to success

- 5.08 Chapter 4 set out the main problems and barriers to success identified in the case studies. Lack of information about TMOs is widespread both among tenants and housing staff. While not appropriate for all estates, greater awareness of the options for tenant participation and control including TMOs is needed. Outside of London, the North West and West Midlands, TMOs are still relatively unknown. Local authorities, Government Offices, ODPM, national tenant organisations and professional bodies, all have a part to play in disseminating information about TMOs.
- 5.09 Networking between TMOs is an area of weakness encountered by the researchers that a number of current initiatives are set to address. Both TMO Online and the creation of a National Federation of TMOs aim to provide a forum for sharing information and good practice between TMOs. This research has generated a national database that will enable TMOs to identify and communicate with each other. The spread of internet and e-mail capacity among TMOs will also facilitate greater communication between TMOs. Local authorities should facilitate this. More face-to-face contact at the regional level through conferences or other events will also contribute to the ability of TMOs to tap into each other's experience and expertise.
- 5.10 Greater awareness and information about the Right to Manage among local authorities and their staff is needed, along with a firm response to those few which seek to obstruct the development of TMOs. It is clear that many local authorities have played an important enabling role: informing tenants' groups about TMOs, and then providing the support and encouragement needed to develop the TMO. A supportive local authority can be particularly useful in providing legal, human resources, IT and payroll support and advice. Equally, some local authorities provide an effective obstacle to the development of TMOs, and in a small number of cases, have undermined established TMOs. Some housing staff and elected members feel threatened by the establishment of a TMO in their area.

## Costs and benefits

- 5.11 The research team was unable to conduct a robust financial evaluation of TMOs for reasons discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. However, the authors conclude that in terms of TMO members' own perception of value for money, they clearly were providing good value for money. Not only were they making savings that could then be used for environmental and other improvements, but they also brought wider benefits beyond the narrow definition of their MMA responsibilities. These included benefits such as better community safety, improved community spirit, friendlier staff, and a more attractive environment.
- 5.12 Some individual board members invest huge amounts of their own time in their TMO for no financial reward. However, the wider benefits to the community were a major source of pride and motivation. TMO activists were often exceptional people, for whom the TMO provided a channel for their energy and drive to improve their estate. Some active members had benefited in terms of their own development, going into employment or further education, while others felt they had benefited socially and psychologically.
- 5.13 For the communities as a whole, TMOs can provide a means to a local housing management presence, along with widespread community activities. Some are outstanding in the range of activities they have taken on and their success in fundraising for these activities. Others provide smaller scale opportunities for social interaction, which nevertheless have an important function in maintaining some sense of shared experience and building social capital.

## Lessons for wider community empowerment

- 5.14 Although, relatively marginal in terms of the total council housing stock, successful TMOs provide an important model of what can be achieved by local people in socially excluded communities and useful lessons for wider community empowerment. They are dynamic organisations that, in the right conditions, grow in confidence and broaden their objectives over time. This in turn may contribute to the building of sustainable communities, which is increasingly becoming an aim of government policy.
- 5.15 As has been discovered with the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, there are no quick fixes to community empowerment. TMOs take at least two years to become established and the need for the training and development of active members continues after establishment, as the context changes and new members become involved. An adequate and annual budget for training has been important in contributing to the success of the more ambitious TMOs.
- 5.16 However, TMOs rely heavily on the work of a small number of activists and such people do not necessarily live on every estate or in every neighbourhood. The TMO model will only work where there are the people with the time and the will to make it work.
- 5.17 TMOs provide many useful and transferable examples of good practice in developing community empowerment that other initiatives may wish to copy. Perhaps the most important lesson is that devolving budgets to the level of an estate, or similar, and

providing the training and support to individual community members to equip them to manage that budget, gives people an opportunity to exercise control and improve the quality of their lives. The TMO and its members may then effectively incubate other community initiatives. This empowers the individual activists and the wider community developing the social capital needed to overcome social exclusion. Somerville (1998, p253) also concluded that 'the empowerment of residents is worth pursuing not only for its own sake, but for the benefits which it can bring for community health and safety and well-being'.

- 5.18 The TMO experience therefore provides some useful lessons for current initiatives in neighbourhood management. It strengthens the arguments for the development of community-based organisations with control over the provision and management of local services. Not only can such organisations bring about a marked increase in the quality of the environment and services in an area, but they can also build the social and political infrastructure that is vital to sustainability. However, this experience also shows that both capacity building and a willingness to support such neighbourhood control on the part of other agencies are required to bring about these positive results.

## Large scale voluntary transfer and arms-length management

- 5.19 Many TMO members and staff interviewed in the course of the research expressed concern about large-scale voluntary transfer: a fear that potential TMOs will be blocked, and existing ones dismantled. There is a common perception that if transfers continue at present levels, and the Right to Manage is not preserved, then the continuous growth in the number of TMOs which has occurred over the last 25 years will come to an end. Equally, the position of TMOs in authorities opting for arms-length management is not clear. Some safeguards are needed to ensure that existing TMOs are not adversely affected by transfer or arms-length management; and to preserve the rights of tenants who may in the future wish to opt for tenant management.
- 5.20 TMOs could, however, provide models for arms-length management organisations (ALMO) demonstrating the capacity of tenants to manage local authority housing themselves. The training programme for TMOs provides an example of the core areas about which ALMO board members need to understand and be competent in.
- 5.21 A few TMOs are looking at taking on the ownership of the stock they manage and at neighbourhood management. While these options are likely to be suitable for a small minority of TMOs, they illustrate how TMOs are, to some extent, part of a continuum along which tenants groups may travel. There is no *a priori* reason why TMOs should not become housing associations or take on neighbourhood management, and for some this appears a logical extension of the activities they are already involved in. It may be useful for TMOs contemplating the RSL route to build closer links with the ownership co-op movement.

## Best Value and tenant compacts

- 5.22 It is not clear what the longer term impact of Best Value and tenant compacts will be on TMOs. It may be that some TMOs will decide to return to local authority management where the council achieves major improvements in the quality of its housing management and maintenance service, and where tenant compacts are seen to widen the opportunities for tenant participation within existing local authority structures. However, these are relatively early days, and the researchers found no evidence of TMOs reverting to the local authority as a result of best value or tenants compacts.

## Growth of Right to Buy

- 5.23 The consequence of increases in Right to Buy sales for management allowances has been discussed in relation to sustainability. The case studies provide no strong evidence of whether or not leaseholders are likely to become more or less involved in TMOs. What did emerge as a concern, both in the TMO survey and the case studies, was the growing incidence of sub-letting and private renting in TMOs. This diminished the pool of potential activists and was perceived as a loss of the very control for which TMOs had strived.

## The future of TMOs

- 5.24 It is difficult to convey within the formal conventions of a research report the full achievements of the TMOs visited. Their strengths have proved difficult to capture through data that can be collected in verifiable form, but the members of the research team were repeatedly impressed by what appeared as beacons of optimism. Most staff and board members were sure that they represented value for money, but the costs saved as against extra voids, vandalism and anti-social behaviour had there been no TMO are impossible to weigh.
- 5.25 The research has shown no cause to doubt the value of TMOs, and many good reasons for promoting their spread. It provides evidence which challenges the common perception that TMOs are 'soft' on rent collection, equal opportunities and tenancy management matters. Any weaknesses, such as patchy collection of management data and lack of codified procedures, are as likely to be found in local authorities, but TMOs have compensatory strengths, particularly responsiveness.
- 5.26 There are many sources of uncertainty about the future of social housing. Some areas are experiencing low demand and abandonment, and it is unclear how far or fast this will spread. There is a government commitment to bring the existing council stock up to 'decent homes standard', but this depends in part on tenants' collective willingness to transfer from the local authority, and many tenants mistrust this option. In the south, the pressures of high demand mean that only the most needy can hope to move into social housing, but as we have seen, these tenants may not have the capacity to contribute to a TMO. On some estates the stock continues to trickle away due to the Right to Buy.

- 5.27 However, an increase in tenants taking the self-management route could prove a positive way of dealing with these uncertainties. TMOs represent an achievement in reducing social exclusion, offering links and ladders to social participation via political engagement and taking responsibility for an aspect of daily life. What are the barriers to their future development?
- 5.28 Relationships with and attitudes of local authorities remain a problem. Many councils are seen as difficult to work with, their procedures cumbersome, some staff and members still sceptical of tenants' capacity to manage. The context of local authority funding makes it difficult to prioritise proactive support for the development of community capacity. Furthermore, as standards rise the spur to escape from inadequate service delivery may lessen.
- 5.29 It is a mistake to see TMOs as a last-chance recovery package for difficult estates: why should tenants be expected to resolve the most intractable problems where many others have failed? There are excellent examples of tenants managing well in an unpromising environment, but the TMO idea might take root more readily in middle-ranking estates. Their chances would be enhanced if their existence were seen as a plus in qualifying to become an arm's length management organisation. There is certainly a rationale for this: it is well established that housing investment is more sustainable when under community control (Taylor, 1995; Watson, 1994).
- 5.30 A further area of uncertainty in tenants' eyes is the attitude of RSLs to tenant involvement. Although local authorities have their shortcomings, it is clear that RSLs may be equally reluctant to trust and empower their tenants. More training and dissemination of good practice is needed, together with still further pressure on this issue from the Housing Corporation. A peripatetic support team funded by a group of RSLs or even by the Housing Corporation or the National Housing Federation might be tried.
- 5.31 The best promoters for TMOs are tenant board members themselves: tenants on other estates are more likely to give credence to them than to a well-paid consultant or senior officer. There could be a programme to facilitate such dissemination, with financial incentives as well as practical support for roving ambassadors. In the choices faced by tenants over the future of their estates, tenant management could prove an attractive third way.

# CHAPTER 6

## Good practice recommendations

6.01 This chapter presents recommendations drawn from the research, including points emerging from the observation in the case studies and through discussion with stakeholders and participants in the regional research workshops. It is not intended as a manual, nor to replace the detailed guidance provided by the ODPM, but seeks to promote evidence-based good practice or ‘what works’. Some points will not be applicable to all TMOs. The agency for action is noted in the right-hand column. The ‘Nat Fed’ refers to the National Federation of TMOs.

<b>1. Pre-establishment stage</b>	<b>Action</b>
1.a. Guidance should be provided to tenant groups on how to choose a training agency. (4.99; Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	ODPM Nat Fed
1.b. There should be formal monitoring of the quality of training provided by training agencies. (4.99; Regional workshops)	ODPM LA
1.c. Tenant groups thinking of going into management should visit an established TMO at an early stage and talk to committee members there about their experience and also visit a range of TMOs during their training. Established TMOs would also benefit from this kind of exchange visit. (TMO Survey; Regional workshops)	TMO
1.d. A panel of TMOs/committee members available to give advice to TMOs in development should be established at either regional or national level. (4.153; 5.31)	ODPM Nat Fed
1.e. The process of going into management at the end of the training process could be made less daunting by having mechanisms in place by which TMOs could ‘staircase up’ by increasing their functions over time, thus enabling tenants to build up competence and confidence before taking on more complex tasks. (Stakeholder interviews; Case Study interviews)	ODPM
1.f. Including council staff and members in training courses during the development stage could help to build better relationships and understanding between all sides. (Case study interviews; regional workshops)	LA Training agencies
1.g. A visit/s to the local housing office by tenants would be a useful element in training. A system by which prospective tenant managers could ‘shadow’ housing staff would help familiarise them with the day-to-day tasks of housing management. (Case Study interviews)	LA Training agencies

1.h.	Other competencies that could usefully be included in the development process are: employment and personnel, managing contractors and contracts, and health and safety. (Case Study interviews)	ODPM Training agencies
1.i.	Development training could be linked into NVQs or Chartered Institute of Housing qualifications so that TMO members gain some formal recognition of the competences they have acquired. Birmingham Co-operative Housing Service runs accredited tenant management courses. Kensington & Chelsea TMO is developing a training and support programme for prospective and existing board members which leads on to the CIH Certificate in Governance. (Stakeholder interviews; Regional workshops)	Nat Fed
1.j.	Consideration needs to be given to the question of whether the Section 16 agency involved in training the TMO is the appropriate body to carry out competency testing or whether it should be done by an independent body. (Case Study interviews; 4.99)	ODPM LAs
1.k.	Training and support should not end with the move into management, but should be extended until the TMO has passed through its first year. (2.71; 4.100; Case Study interviews)	LA Training agency
<b>2.</b>	<b>Performance reporting, monitoring and evaluation</b>	<b>Action</b>
2.a.	ODPM should provide general guidance to LAs and TMOs on performance information and monitoring arrangements to be negotiated and agreed in their management agreements. Local authorities and TMOs should be clear about and agree on the performance information required. Performance information requirements should be limited to a small number of indicators. (2.45)	ODPM LA TMO
2.b.	Local authorities should work with TMOs to assist monitoring. This could involve regular visits to the TMO to gather information and data. (4.71; 5.05)	LA
2.c.	Local authorities should provide training and support to TMOs in the recording and presentation of housing management performance data. (4.71; 5.05)	LA
2.d.	It is helpful if TMOs make returns to the local authority on a quarterly basis providing information in the same format as is produced for the rest of the council stock. This provides comparative data. (4.71; 5.05)	TMO
2.e.	At regular intervals, 2-5 years, the local authority should monitor the total performance of the TMO in fulfilling its responsibilities under the MMA. (Case Study interviews; LB Southwark, 2000)	LA
2.f.	Some TMOs have set up 'bench-marking' circles to monitor each others' performance. (Westminster case studies)	TMO
2.g.	The local authority and TMO should agree performance indicators/standards for the council in respect of services provided by the council to TMOs. (LB Southwark, 2000)	LA/TMO

2.h.	The local authority should also be monitored in relation to the functions and services that it retains responsibility for in relation to TMOs. (LB Southwark, 2000)	TMO
<b>3. Allocations and void management</b>		<b>Action</b>
3.a.	TMOs and local authorities should work together to ensure that the allocations policy and procedure is acceptable to both. A more flexible approach to allocations should be considered especially in areas of low demand e.g. local lettings, intra-estate transfers to attract and retain active TMO members. (4.24; 4.25; 4.26; Case Study interviews)	LA TMO
3.b.	It is important for the long-term sustainability of TMOs, particularly small ones, that tenants moving to the TMO are prepared to participate in it (LB Southwark, 2000). Local authorities should be pro-active in attracting tenants and promoting TMOs, e.g., producing posters, leaflets and housing registration forms with information about TMOs. Lewisham, for example, contacts everyone who ticks the 'interested in co-op' box to tell them more. (4.97)	LA
3.c.	TMOs could also be more pro-active in this area and develop links with the local media to promote their achievements and their image. (Regional workshops)	TMO
3.d.	Provided housing need criteria permit, tenants who positively want to live in a TMO should be allowed to transfer. (4.95; Case Study interviews)	LA
3.e.	Councils should actively promote TMOs by leaflets, posters and housing registration forms. (4.97)	LA
3.f.	Prioritise filling voids along the entrance roads to give a better impression of an estate. (4.29; Case Study interviews)	TMO
3.g.	Use net curtains rather than metal security shutters for voids. This is a cheaper alternative which looks more attractive and gives the impression that the properties are occupied, thus deterring vandalism and break-ins. (4.29)	TMO
3.h.	Consider housing asylum-seekers and key-workers in areas of low demand, or offer empty properties to the LA for decant purposes. (4.93)	TMO LA
3.i.	Interviewing prospective tenants, accompanying them on viewings and giving them the opportunity to meet other tenants enables committee members to assess tenants' attitudes towards tenant management and tenants to get an idea what living in a TMO involves. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
<b>4. Tenancy management</b>		<b>Action</b>
4.a.	One of the strengths of TMOs is 'nipping problems in the bud' through the use of personal contact, but they should also have a policy and procedure in place, agreed with the council, for dealing with tenant disputes or nuisance. (4.38; 4.39)	TMO

4.b.	Mediation services can be called in if tenants in dispute cannot agree. (4.39)	TMO
4.c.	Committee members can act as the 'eyes and ears' of an estate, but they need to be aware that it can be dangerous to go round knocking on doors to try and sort problems out, and inappropriate to adopt a vigilante approach. Where there are staff employed, it may be better for them to tackle these issues. (Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	TMO
4.d.	The local authority should ensure that the TMO has the training to keep up with legislation and practice in this area and offer back-up and help and, where necessary, the services of their legal department. (Regional workshops)	LA
4.e.	A formal record of complaints and how they are dealt with should be kept. (4.42; Case Study interviews)	TMO
<b>5.</b>	<b>Day-to-day repairs, grounds maintenance and cleaning</b>	<b>Action</b>
5.a.	Employment of estate-based care-takers/handypersons enables personal knowledge of properties and tenants and thus a prompt and appropriate response to problems. (4.22)	TMO
5.b.	One TMO offers cheap home-improvements work by the repairs team as a service to tenants. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.c.	The early payment of contractors can contribute to improving the service provided by them, TMOs in the same borough could negotiate jointly with contractors to strengthen their bargaining power. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.d.	Consider employing estate-based cleaners/caretakers/gardeners. (4.35; TMO survey; Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.e.	Try regular estate inspections by committee and staff, open to residents. (4.35; Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.f.	Daily rubbish collection and the free removal of bulky items deters fly-tipping. (4.37; Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.g.	Try litter-picking days, involving committee members, staff and tenants. (4.35)	TMO
5.h.	Ensure prompt removal of graffiti and prompt repair to damage. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.i.	Consider devolving budgets to individual blocks or areas for improvements, gardens etc. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
5.j.	Consider having a gardening subcommittee or group. (TMO survey; Case Study interviews)	TMO

6.	<b>Security</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Measures taken by TMOs to increase security include:	
6.a.	Prompt removal of graffiti and prompt repair to damage caused by vandalism. (4.150; Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.b.	Installation of security doors and door-entry systems for blocks of flats. (4.150; Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.c.	Secure entry system using cards for elderly or lone tenants. (4.152; Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.d.	CCTV in vulnerable parts of the estate. (4.150; Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.e.	Employment of community wardens/estate rangers. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.f.	Holding confidential police surgeries where tenants can report problems. (4.150; Case Study interviews)	TMO
6.g.	Holding summer play schemes/youth activities during the school holidays can cut down on vandalism and damage. (4.152; Case Study interviews)	TMO
<b>7.</b>	<b>Rent and service charge collection; managing arrears</b>	<b>Action</b>
7.a.	Holding rental income and management allowances in the TMO bank account, or investing the money until due, can generate a large amount of interest. (Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	TMO
7.b.	A dedicated rent officer in the TMO cuts down on arrears. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
7.c.	The small claims court can be used for pursuing the rent arrears of ex-residents. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
7.d.	Some TMOs have tried incentives and disincentives to encourage prompt payment of rent, e.g. taking away a parking space if a tenant gets into arrears. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
<b>8.</b>	<b>Finance, surpluses and capital works</b>	<b>Action</b>
8.a.	The financial duties of a TMO should be agreed with the local authority and clearly set out in a manual. The TMO should have access to suitable support and training. (Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	LA/TMO
8.b.	TMOs should be allowed to keep the surpluses that they generate through their good housekeeping, and to transfer agreed amounts for which there is a clear plan specifying use of the funds into a special TMO account. (4.16; Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	LA
8.c.	TMOs should be involved in discussions about major works spending across the authority and have equitable access to funding. TMOs should be able to bid for a share of capital funding in the same way as other areas in the	LA/TMO

	local authority. Working with a council surveyor can be helpful to TMOs with capital works responsibilities. (4.93; Case Study interviews)	
8.d.	MMA's need to be clearer about the division of responsibilities between the TMO and the local authority, for example, what counts as minor or major expenditure, what counts as maintenance and repairs or capital spending. (4.77; Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	LA/TMO
8.e.	TMOs have successfully taken their council to arbitration to have their management allowances increased. (4.78; 4.85; Case Study interviews)	TMO
8.f.	A directory/data-base of TMOs that have made successful bids for funding, and are willing to share their experience, would be very useful. (Regional workshops; 4.144; 4.145; 4.146)	Nat Fed
<b>9.</b>	<b>Committees and meetings</b>	<b>Action</b>
9.a.	TMOs should hold open meetings to enable people to participate, and consult regularly with tenants outside the committee structure. This can help guard against a culture of decision-making which excludes people outside the committee, or is dominated by individuals. Part of the agenda can remain closed, where necessary, for the discussion of confidential business. (4.63; Case Study interviews; Regional workshops)	TMO
9.b.	As part of Best Value, all local authorities are expected to adopt the CRE's code of practice for rented housing. This should also be adopted by TMOs. (2.46; 4.121; Regional workshops)	TMO
9.c.	TMOs should have a code of conduct for committee members setting out expected behaviour and practice, and the mechanisms for resolving conflict. CCH have a code of conduct for housing co-ops which could be adapted to suit TMOs. (4.67; Stakeholder interviews)	TMO
9.d.	TMOs should consider using co-option to strengthen their committees and widen representation of hard to reach groups. A mixture of skills and relevant professional expertise may be useful, e.g. surveyors, community development workers, councillors. (2.41; 4.91; Regional workshops)	TMO
9.e.	Where there are a large number of seats on a TMO board and places remain unfilled, it may useful to reduce the board to a more effective working number. (2.41; Regional workshops)	TMO
9.f.	A way of encouraging new members might be to have a system of understudies, shadowing, and mentoring in place. Training for new members is also likely to work well where a number join at the same time so they can be trained as a group. (4.91; Case Study interviews)	TMO
9.g.	Some TMOs have used surveys to identify groups which are under represented on the committee, and what the barriers to their participation might be. (4.127; Case Study interviews)	TMO

9.h.	Young people are often under-represented on committees, Belle Isle has a junior EMB, The Avenues includes them in small jobs around the estate. (4.126; Case Study interviews)	TMO
9.i.	Meetings could be held at different times to allow a range of people to attend, e.g. evening meetings for working people, day-time meetings for people with caring responsibilities and for elderly people. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
9.j.	Either a crèche or child-care expenses could be made available to enable carers to attend meetings and training courses. (4.127; Case Study interviews)	TMO
9.k.	Committees should plan for the replacement of office-holders through the recruitment and training of possible successors, for example, developing a programme of training for vice chairs so that they can substitute for the chair when required. (Regional workshops)	TMO
9.l.	Away days or weekends for committee and staff can be helpful to review progress and the direction in which the TMO needs to go. (4.103; Case Study interviews)	TMO
<b>10.</b>	<b>Training of committee, members and staff</b>	<b>Action</b>
10.a.	An annual review of the TMO's training needs should be carried out. This might be done more effectively by an outside body. (Regional workshops)	TMO
10.b.	Following on from reviewing training needs, TMOs should develop annual training plans and their implementation should be monitored. (Regional workshops)	TMO/LA
10.c.	TMOs receive £20 per property for committee costs to cover training. This should be used for training, conferences etc. and not absorbed into other budgets. Thought should also be given to adjusting this figure according to the size and location of TMOs. (4.102; Regional workshops)	TMO LA
10.d.	Some TMOs fund committee and staff members to go on nationally accredited courses in, e.g., housing management and tenant participation. (TMO survey; Case Study interviews)	TMO
10.e.	Skills audits of tenants can be used to identify the training needs on an estate. (4.147; Regional workshops)	TMO
10.f.	IT training is popular with tenants and useful in increasing their employment skills. (4.135; Regional workshops)	TMO
10.g.	Some multi-lingual TMOs offer English language classes. (4.127; Case Study interviews)	TMO
10.h.	Staff will not have gone through the development period with committee members and it is important that the ethos of the TMO is shared with them. A formal training structure and induction period for new staff is helpful here. (Regional workshops)	TMO

10.i.	New members of staff should be supported and, where they will be working on their own, arrangements made for some overlap of other staff, or for extra support from the committee. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
10.j.	Investing in the training and development of staff could help with staff retention. Staff could be funded to do accredited courses, e.g. CIH National Certificate in Concierge and Caretaking, Certificate in Tenant Participation, Diploma in Housing Management, MBA as appropriate. (4.116; Case Study Interviews; Regional workshops)	TMO
10.k.	Tenant management should be promoted as a career path for housing workers, and should form an integral part of housing training courses. (Regional workshops)	CIH
<b>11.</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Action</b>
11.a.	Guidelines setting out the relationship of the committee to staff in terms of behaviour and practice are needed. These should include clear demarcation of duties between staff and committee and mechanisms for arbitration in case of dispute. (4.67; 4.68; Case Study interviews)	TMO
11.b.	TMOs should have access to the local authority's personnel department for advice concerning staffing matters and to payroll for the administration of salaries and pensions. (Case Study interviews)	LA
11.c.	Where committee members lack the relevant skills to carry out appraisals of staff, an outside agency can be called in to carry this out for them. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
11.d.	Staff (and committee members) working alone in TMO offices are potentially vulnerable to attack; training should be provided for dealing with such situations, and panic buttons installed, or the TMO could be linked up to the local authority's central link system. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
11.e.	Some neighbouring TMOs have linked up to organise a system of reciprocal cover for sick leave and annual leave, and in one borough a retired TMO manager provides locum cover. (4.109; Case Study interviews)	TMO
11.f.	It could be supportive for TMO workers, especially those working on their own, to be part of a local TMO workers' forum, or to link in with other local housing networks.(4.109; Case Study interviews)	TMO
11.g.	The development of a TMO staff network which covered staff training needs could provide a useful support to staff. (4.115; Regional workshops)	Nat Fed
11.h.	Staff should have the same conditions of employment as their local authority counterparts – rates of pay, leave entitlements and pension rights. (4.117; Case Study interviews)	TMO LA

<b>12. Tenant Information and participation</b>	<b>Action</b>
12.a. Dates and agendas of meetings should be circulated to all tenants so that they know the issues coming up for discussion. (4.133)	TMO
12.b. Where possible, communications should be available in large print for those with poor eyesight. (4.133)	TMO
12.c. Sub-committees are a way of involving people beyond the management committee. (4.62; 4.130; Case Study interviews)	TMO
12.d. There is a variety of ways tenants can be involved apart from meetings e.g. gardening, fund-raising, social activities, or in small jobs around the office. (4.127; 4.130; TMO survey; Case Study interviews)	TMO
12.e. Attendance at AGMs could be boosted by having a celebrity as a guest speaker, e.g. Michael Portillo at Kensington and Chelsea TMO. (Stakeholder interviews)	TMO
12.f. Having a system of reps for floors, blocks, or areas of an estate can help spread membership of the management committee. (Case Study interviews)	TMO
12.g. TMOs tenants should be included in local authority satisfaction surveys, undertaken as part of the Best Value regime, to allow monitoring and comparison of satisfaction levels. (Regional workshops)	LA/TMO
<b>13. Relationship with Local Authority</b>	<b>Action</b>
Good relations between TMOs and local authorities are best achieved if they have a shared understanding of TMOs and how they work, and if both parties keep the other informed.	
13.a. The MMA should be clearer, both in its definitions and in its division of responsibilities between the TMO and the local authorities. (4.78; Case study interviews)	LA/TMO ODPM
13.b. A few local authorities have failed to sign the MMA although this is required by the statutory guidance. Signing the agreement is important symbolically and promotes trust: a 'signing ceremony' is an opportunity to promote the TMO and demonstrates goodwill. (4.77; Case Study interviews)	LA
13.c. Local authorities should have a written TMO strategy document which is reviewed regularly and with which officers and Housing Committee/Cabinet members are familiar. (4.80)	LA
13.d. A local authority liaison officer is essential, and links are also needed at other levels. TMOs should be circulated with a list of council staff, which is regularly updated. The council's liaison officer should ensure that staff are briefed about the TMO. (4.78; Case Study interviews)	LA

13.e.	Greater publicity and promotion of TMOs and their achievements among local authority housing staff is needed. Government, professional bodies and tenants organisations all have a role to play. (Regional workshops)	ODPM/ GOs CIH Nat Fed
13.f.	In cases of reorganisation, the local authority should keep the TMO informed and should retain a named liaison officer. (4.78; Case Study interviews)	LA
13.g.	Councils should keep TMOs included and informed by sending them relevant committee reports, internal briefings and policy papers relating to housing management and by inviting staff and board members to attend relevant training and briefing sessions. (4.80; 4.84)	LA
13.h.	Local authorities with several TMOs should set up a TMO forum and provide the necessary facilities to enable it to function effectively. (Case Study interviews)	LA
13.i.	TMOs should have the opportunity to take part in LA decision making processes, such as area committees and ALMO working party. (4.84; Case Study interviews)	LA
13.j.	Local authorities should be sensitive to the needs of a TMO when making nominations, e.g. nominating prospective tenants who could contribute positively to, or at the least will not make management problems for the TMO, providing housing need criteria permit. (4.78; 4.96; Case Study interviews)	LA TMO
<b>14. LSVT</b>		<b>Action</b>
14.a.	The principles of the existing management agreements between a local authority and each TMO should be retained in management agreements between the new landlord and each TMO where a transfer takes place. Any variations should be mutually agreed. (4.109; 4.153; 5.19)	LA/HA
14.b.	ODPM and the Housing Corporation should develop their policy reinforcing existing guidance in respect of existing and future TMOs in relation to stock transfers. This should include: – a tenant management framework for transferring TMOs and transferring tenants; (4.153; 5.19; Regional workshops) – enabling TMOs to appoint their own independent advisor on the impact of transfer on the TMO. (Case Study interview)	ODPM HCorp.
14.c.	Alternatively, ODPM might consider legislation that would preserve the Right to Manage for tenants who have been subject to voluntary transfer. (4.109; 4.153; 5.19)	ODPM
<b>15. Networking</b>		<b>Action</b>
	The regional research workshops highlighted the need for greater networking between TMOs. The following are recommendations for fostering greater communication and networking between TMOs:	
15.a.	Local TMO forums for exchange of ideas, mutual support, training etc.	TMO

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 15.b. Working together as 'benchmarking partners'.                       | TMO             |
| 15.c. Grouping together for purchasing to achieve economies of scale.    | TMO             |
| 15.d. Internet access for TMOs through the local authority system.       | LA/TMO          |
| 15.e. A national directory of TMOs, a national newsletter and a website. | ODPM<br>Nat Fed |
| 15.f. Regional conferences and events<br>(all: Regional workshops)       | ODPM<br>Nat Fed |

# APPENDIX I

## Methodology

The research was conducted in five stages:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Local authority survey
- TMO survey
- Case studies and residents survey
- Research workshops

Initial stakeholder interviews were conducted with the organisations listed in Appendix IV in February and March 2001. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the key issues and obtain their views on appropriate criteria and indicators for evaluation.

The second stage of the study was a national postal survey of local authorities in England which aimed to establish a full list of established and developing TMOs, their size, age and responsibilities, along with information on the support and training available to TMOs from local authorities.

Following on from this, a base-line postal survey of established TMOs was conducted in April 2001. Non-respondents were posted reminders and followed up by phone where possible. This survey covered history, current responsibilities and activities, performance information, a profile of board members, attendance at AGMs, achievements, obstacles to success and other details.

Based on the information obtained in the local authority and TMO surveys, case studies were selected and approached representing a cross-section of established TMOs and TMOs in development. Sixteen established TMOs and two TMOs in development were included as case studies and the fieldwork conducted in the last quarter of 2001. Key criteria in the selection of case studies were location, size, type of authority, level of black and ethnic minority involvement, whether or not the TMO had been set up under the Right to Manage. One TMO which had been transferred through LSVT was also included.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the case studies with TMO board members and staff, local authority staff and councillors. Documentary material including minutes, policy and strategy documents, newsletters, performance information and annual reports were studied where available.

In general, the systems on which TMOs maintain their records did not allow for easy compilation of the performance data required for this study. As a result, most of the data has had to be compiled manually. As the TMOs manage much smaller numbers of properties, statistics can be easily skewed by a few unusual events. When comparisons are made with local authorities, this must be borne in mind.

<b>Summary of TMOs Reviewed</b>		
	<b>Data Received</b>	<b>TMO Not Operational</b>
Alpha	T	
Applegarth House	T	
Belle Isle North	T	
Carlton Vale	T	
Cottingham Close	T	
Delves	T	
Digmoor EMB	T**	
Dixon Clark Court	T*	
Five Ways	T	
Glebe Gardens	T	
Grosvenor & Regency	T	
Heath Town	T	
Kerridge Court		T
Roupell Park	T	
SMART		T
Springs	T	
The Avenues	T	
Turf Hill	T**	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>
* Data provided but not in format comparable with best value performance indicators		
** Data provided but do not effective responsibility for areas under review.		

The team's original intention was to conduct focus groups in each of the case studies to obtain the views of "ordinary" residents but given the low turn-out in one instance and the concentration of activists in another, it was decided to conduct a residents survey instead. This was conducted in January and February 2002. A note on the survey method is included in Appendix V.

Preliminary analysis of the findings was then presented at three regional workshops in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Case study participants and respondents to the TMO survey were invited to attend. These events provided a useful opportunity to road-test findings and proposed recommendations for good practice and contributed the conclusions and recommendations of this final report.

# APPENDIX II

## TMO Case Studies

Name of TMO	Authority	LA Type	Region	Status	Size	BME 3+ ctee members	Year estd.	Type of property	% of Right to Buy
Alpha	Sheffield	MBC	Yorkshire	RtM	100-199		1997	Post-war maisonettes	0%
Applegarth House Co-op	Southwark	LBC	London/SE	pre-RtM	0-99		1992	Medium-rise	19%
Belle Isle (N) EMB	Leeds	MBC	Yorkshire	pre-RtM	500+		1991	Low-rise	18%
Carlton Vale RMO	Westminster	LBC	London/SE	RtM	100-199		1997	Medium-rise flats	54%
Cottingham Close TMO	Lambeth	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499		1995	High & low-rise	23%
Delves East TMO	Walsall	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	100-199		1998	Pre-war houses	7%
Digmoor EMB	West Lancs.	DC	N.West	pre-RtM	500+		1991	Post-war houses	31%
Dixon Clark Court TMO	Islington	LBC	London/SE	RtM	0-99		1999	High-rise	20%
Five Ways TMC	Lewisham	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499	✓	1994	High-rise & houses	12%*
Glebe Gardens TMO	Richmond	LSVT	London/SE	LSVT	100-199		1999	Low-rise & houses	35%
Grosvenor & Regency EMO	Westminster	LBC	London/SE	RtM	500+	✓	1998	Medium-rise flats	29%
Heath Town EMB	Wolverh'ton	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	500+	✓	1996	High & medium rise	1%
Kerridge Ct	Islington	LBC	London/SE	in devpt	100-199		-	Low-rise	4%
Roupell Park RMC	Lambeth	LBC	London/SE	RtM	200-499	✓	1996	High-rise	8%
SMART	Carlisle	DC	N.West	In devpt	100-199		-	Low rise & houses	21%
Springs TMC	Bury	MBC	N.West	RtM	200-499		1996	Pre-war flats	0%
The Avenues TMO	Walsall	MBC	W.Mids	RtM	200-499		1999	Pre-war houses	31%
Turf Hill EMB	Rochdale	MBC	N.West	RtM	200-499		1997	Pre-war houses & flats	27%

\* Also properties owned by Family Housing Association

Name of TMO	Day to day			Cleaning			Rent & service		
	repairs	Allocations	Tenancy mgmt.	communal areas	Capital works	Void mgmt.	charge collection	Grounds maintenance	Other
Alpha	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Applegarth House Co-op	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Belle Isle (N) EMB	✓	✓	Joint		Some	✓		✓	
Carlton Vale RMO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Cottingham Close TMO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Delves East TMO	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Digmoor EMB	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)		(✓)		(✓)	
Dixon Clark Court TMO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Five Ways TMC	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Glebe Gardens TMO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Grosvenor & Regency EMO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Heath Town EMB	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Kerridge Ct									
Roupell Park RMC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
SMART									
Springs TMC	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
The Avenues TMO	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Turf Hill EMB						(✓)			

NB (✓) denotes limited role

Name of TMO	No. of staff	Local office	% of women on board	% of 60+ on board	No. of vacant seats	No. of LA TMOs	Social activities	Environmental activities	EOP Policy	Tenant satisfaction
Alpha	2	✓	63%	38%	7	2	✓		✓	89%
Applegarth House Co-op	1	✓	88%	50%	1	14	✓		✓	91%
Belle Isle (N) EMB	18	✓	50%	30%	2	2	✓	✓	✓	69%
Carlton Vale RMO	1	✓	90%		0	15	✓		✓	89%
Cottingham Close TMO	5	✓	90%		5	15	✓	✓	✓	85%
Delves East TMO	8	✓	67%	78%	0	10	✓	✓	✓	46%
Digmoor EMB	N/A	✓	63%	19%	3	4	✓	✓		65%
Dixon Clark Court TMO	1	✓			1	34	✓			76%
Five Ways TMC	4	✓	50%	17%	0	4	✓		✓	90%
Glebe Gardens TMO	4	✓	58%			1			✓	86%
Grosvenor & Regency EMO	12	✓	75%			15	✓	✓	✓	79%
Heath Town EMB	25	✓	58%	33%	4	4	✓	✓	✓	65%
Kerridge Ct	N/A	N/A		10%		34				N/A
Roupell Park RMC	16	✓	76%	41%	5	15	✓	✓	✓	86%
SMART	N/A	N/A	45%	55%	1	0	✓			N/A
Springs TMC	7	✓	73%	27%	0	1	✓	✓	✓	71%
The Avenues TMO	3	✓	60%	7%	0	10	✓	✓	✓	69%
Turf Hill EMB	4	✓	91%	9%	1	2	✓		✓	65%

## APPENDIX III

# Case study profiles

## Alpha Tenant Management Co-operative Sheffield City Council

### Background

Alpha TMC is situated in the Park Hill Estate approximately a mile south of the city centre. It was established in 1997 under the Right to Manage. The TMO covers 151 units and one sale under the Right to Buy is currently being negotiated.

The TMO was established as a result of the campaign around Tenants' Choice legislation in the late 1980s. Tenants were concerned that private landlords might bid for ownership of the estate once the refurbishment being carried out under Estate Action funding was completed. A survey showed that 97% of tenants were against privatisation and the Tenants' Association decided to set up a TMC to be responsible for day-to-day management, while the council retained ownership.

### Organisation and Staffing

There are 8 committee members, all of whom are tenants, and 7 unfilled seats. There are 5 women committee members and 3 men and there are no committee members from black and minority ethnic groups at present. 3 of the members are aged over 60, 3 are in the 40-59 age-group, and 2 in the 20-39 age-group. The committee meets monthly and every fourth meeting is an open one. There are 2 sub-committees, Maintenance and Social, which both have the same membership as the main committee.

The TMO employs two members of staff, an estate manager who works for 4 days a week and a caretaker/handyperson who works for 25 hours a week. Committee members staff the office on the manager's day off. Major repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance are contracted out

The TMO office is based in a property in the middle of the estate. The TMO has internet access and it has its own bank account.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO sees its task as housing management, but it also provides informal social activities for tenants, eg, trips to Blackpool and to the races. Committee members have also raised funds for a football ground for the estate.

## Property

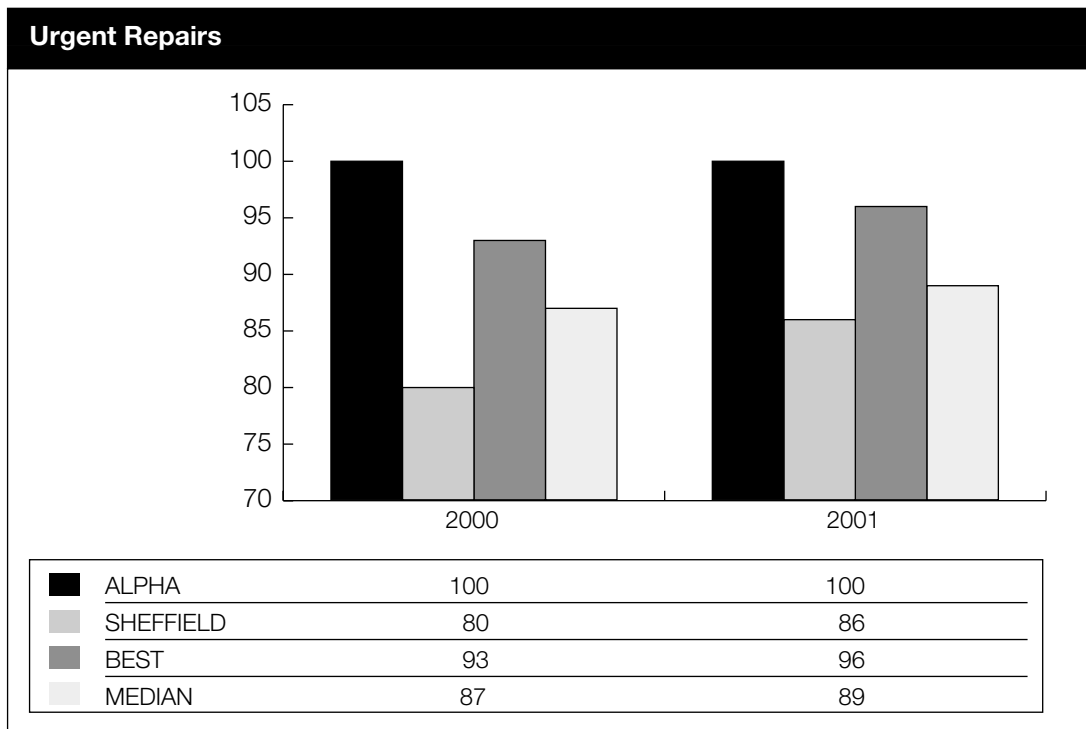
Alpha consists of four blocks of split-level design maisonettes built in 1961. Faulty design and construction led to problems with the stock and in the late 1980s Estate Action Funding was obtained and a major refurbishment programme undertaken. £70,000 was spent per property: roofs were pitched, walls brick-clad and gardens provided.

## Performance

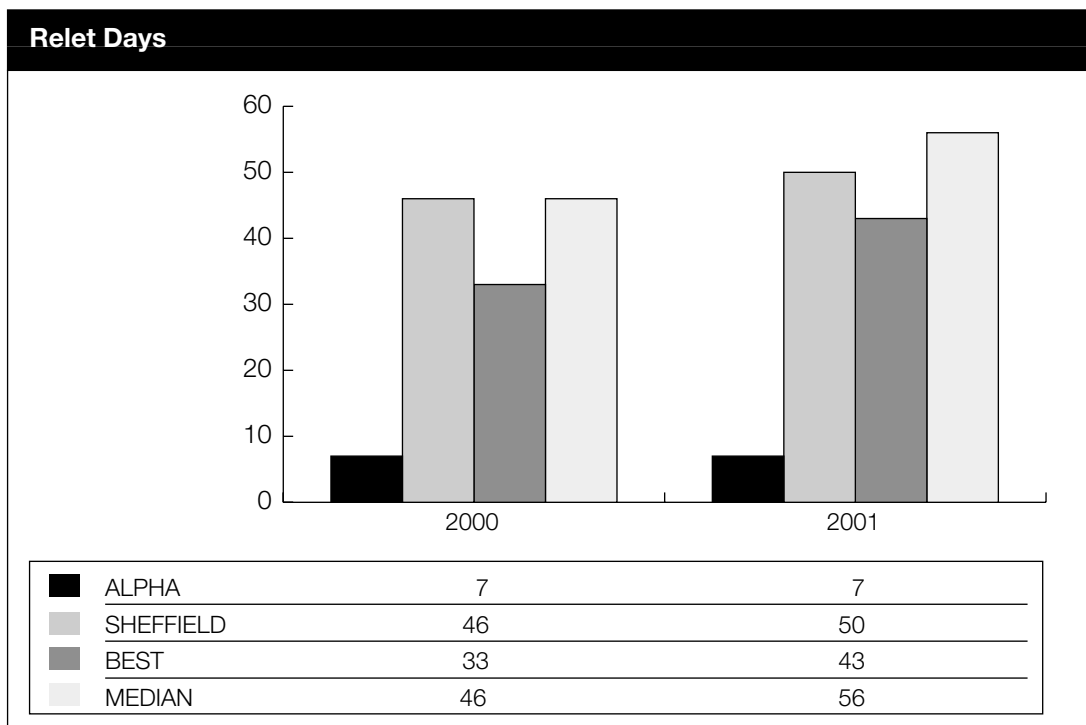
Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	x

All urgent repairs are completed within government time limits. This performance is better than the Local Authority, the median and best 25% of all Local Authorities for both 2000 and 2001. This supports the views expressed in the interviews which state that jobs are frequently done within a day, minor jobs within an hour.

Non urgent repairs are completed within government time limits, but the average number of days taken to complete the repairs is not available.



The actual average number of days taken to let void properties is not available, but all lettings are completed within 7 days. This is still considerably better than the other three comparators for this activity. 7 days is shown in the figure representing the longest period the Alpha would take to relet a property.



## Tenant satisfaction

89% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 65% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 31% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 19% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 25% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 20% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

Sheffield City Council has two other established TMOs and one in development. There is one Tenant Participation Officer based centrally and a housing liaison officer in each housing area. However, the Housing Department has recently undergone re-organisation and there is no liaison officer in post for Alpha at the moment. The council provides out-of-hours cover for Alpha (for which a charge is made). Training is available to TMOs on an ad hoc basis and advice is given on a wide range of issues.

## Future Plans

The TMO is planning to employ another caretaker/handyperson to support their existing worker.

# Applegarth House Tenant Management Co-operative London Borough of Southwark

## Background

Applegarth House Tenant Management Co-operative is an inner-city TMO situated in the Nelson Gardens estate in Southwark. It was established in 1992 and was the first TMO to be initiated in Southwark following transfer from the GLC. The scheme covers 53 units of which 9 have been sold.

The TMO was established because of tenants' concerns about security and safety and dissatisfaction with the council's service. The continuation ballot held in February 2002 produced a vote of 76% in favour of the TMO.

## Organisation and Staffing

There are eight committee members, seven women and one man, and one vacant seat. All of the committee members are tenants, and one is of black or minority ethnic origin. Four are aged over 60, two are in the 40-59 age group, and two in the 20-39 age group. The committee meets monthly and there are no sub-committees. There is a committee rep for each floor of the block.

The TMO has one employee, an administrator who works 21-28 hours per week, and a cleaner who is employed through a cleaning company. The TMO office is based on the ground floor of the block and the administrator, chair and treasurer have frequent contact. Repairs are carried out through a contract with Southwark Direct (an LA service) and grounds maintenance is done through voluntary labour.

The TMO has its own bank account but does not have internet access.

## Property

Applegarth House is a 7 storey block which makes up one side of 4 blocks around a leafy square. The properties consist of 7 bedsits, 14 three bed-roomed flats and 32 two-bedroomed flats. There are no particular problems with the properties.

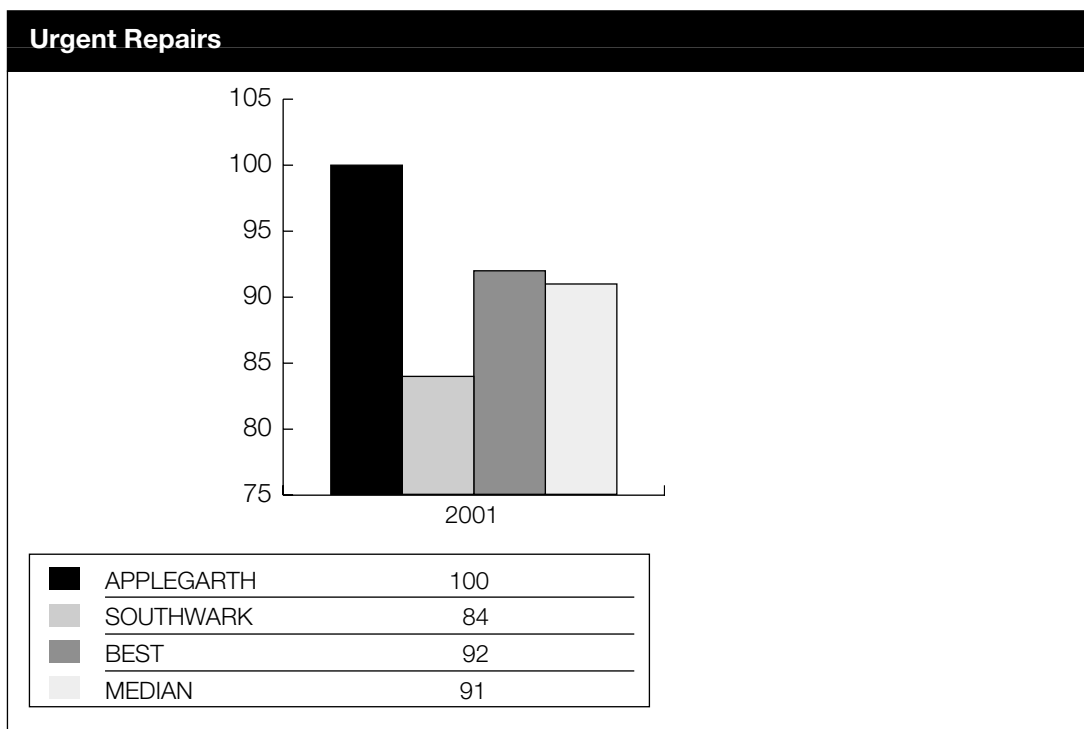
## Non-housing activities

The TMO focuses mainly on housing management, but it also provides informal social activities for tenants, eg, bingo sessions and jumble sales and has an input each year into the Nelson Square summer fair.

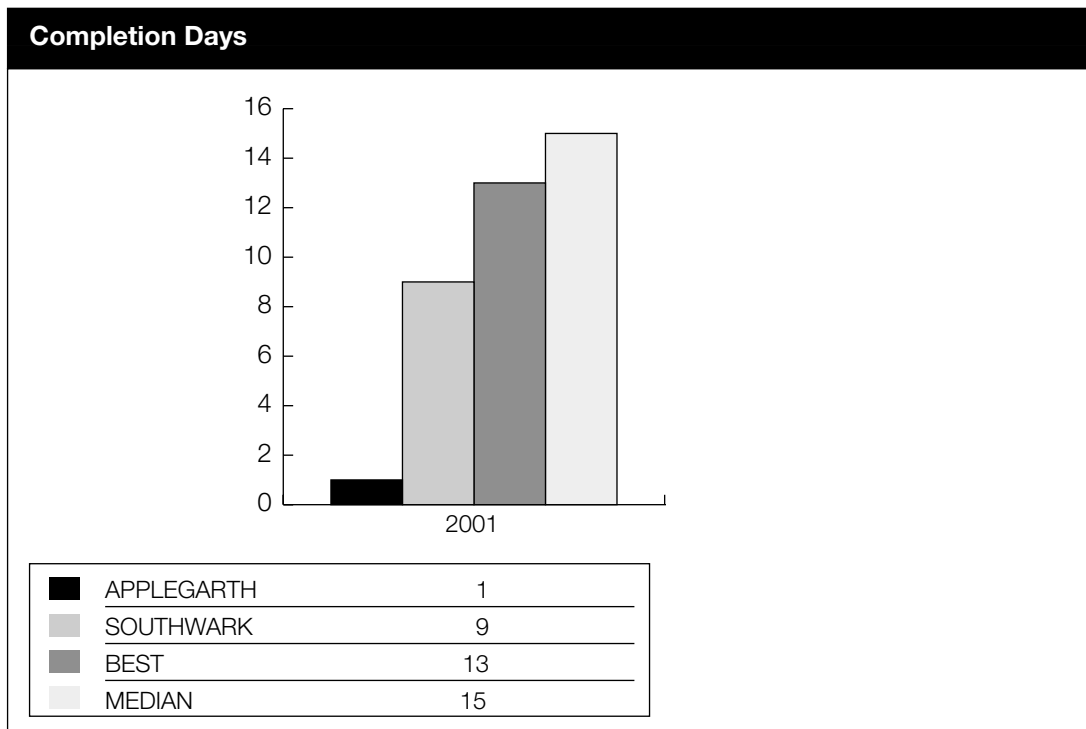
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

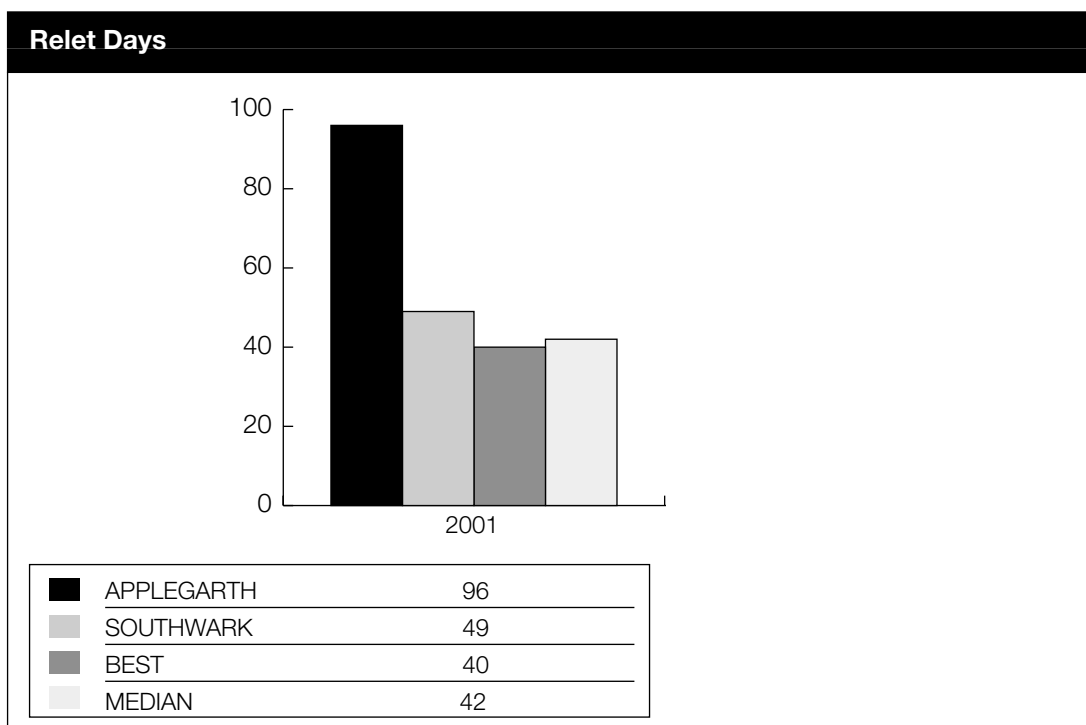
All repairs are completed by Applegarth within 24 hours. This compares favourably with the performance of the other comparators.



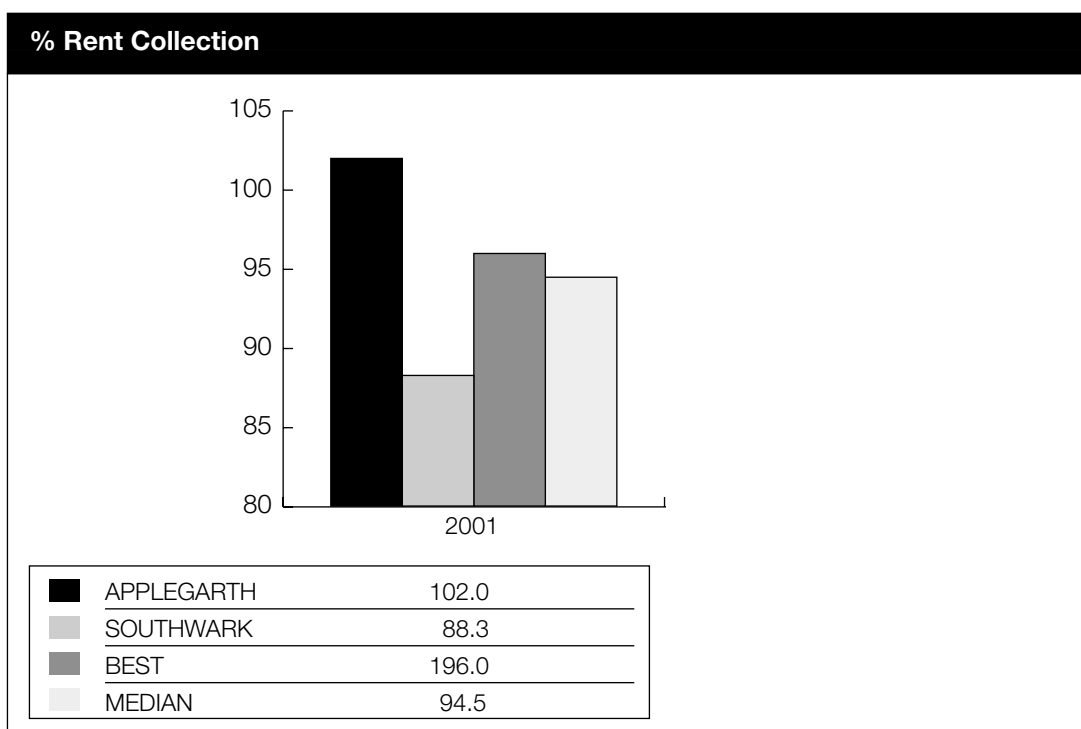
All repairs are completed within 24 hours. The level of repairs is very low as the TMO completes approximately only 7 repairs per quarter. The TMO performance is far better than that of the other comparators.



The average number of days taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties in 2001 was 96 days. This was due to a dispute d nomination from the Local Authority and the property was vandalised while the dispute was resolved. There is therefore no realistic measure, in the information provided, of Applegarth's typical performance.



The TMO collected 102% of rental income due in 2001, thus beating the Top Quartile performance of 96%.



## Tenant satisfaction

91% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 77% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 41% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 40% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 35% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 25% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

Southwark has fourteen established TMOs and five in development. The council has a Tenant Management Support Unit within the Housing Department which employs five specialist staff. It supports a TMO liaison committee, chaired by the chair of Applegarth TMC, and provides free training courses for TMOs. A liaison officer for Applegarth House is based in the local neighbourhood office and the TMO is monitored and supported by an officer based in the Tenant Management Support Unit. The council has recently completed a review of its tenant management practice and made a number of recommendations.

## Future Plans

The committee is discussing plans with the local authority to move to Right to Manage status at some point in the future. They are also planning to initiate more tenant involvement in order to ensure the sustainability of the committee and the TMO.

# Belle Isle Estate Management Board Leeds City Council

## Background

Belle Isle North in Leeds is an EMB covering a large outer city estate of about 1500 houses and low rise flats. It was established in 1991. The idea emerged from tenants in the course of consultation over an Estate Action programme to modernise the properties.

Tenants were concerned about poor housing services in general, but particularly repairs. They were supported by a community worker and a local councillor, who believed that Estate Action funds should be directed at building community capacity as well as physical renovation. The EMB therefore pre-dates the Right to Manage but they are about to exercise rights under that legislation (see below).

The EMB was backed by 95% of tenants on a 55% poll in 1999, the turnout figure higher than had been obtained in a recent parliamentary by-election.

## Organisation and Staffing

There are 12 places on the Board, of which one is reserved for a home owner (about 250 properties have been bought under the Right to Buy) and two taken by local councillors. Currently there are 2 vacancies: filling them has not been a priority due to the pending enlargement of the EMB, which will involve other restructuring.

The 10 members show an equal gender balance and all age groups apart from under 21s are roughly equally represented. There are few ethnic minority tenants on the estate and none on the Board. Typical attendance at the AGM is about 7% which is about 100 people.

The EMB selects and monitors the performance of the repairs contractor. Allocations are the EMB's responsibility but follow council policy. The EMB works to minimise relet times. Anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes are arbitrated by a Board member from a different part of the estate: they have not had cases that were too intractable for this approach. Two estate caretakers are seconded and this has led to such posts being created on other estates in the city.

Staff are technically employed by the local authority rather than the EMB. The neighbourhood housing office of the City Council, with a manager and 10 other staff, works from a converted pair of houses. They carry out housing management and rent collection functions, reporting to the Board as well as through the normal line management structures of the council. This dual accountability sometimes creates problems in practice. The EMB Development Co-ordinator, who is responsible for the development of policy and practice with the board, works from another pair of houses that also serves as a drop-in and base for

the Board. She has an administrator and a part-time assistant working to her, plus four workers on specific projects: see below.

## Non-housing activities

The Winrose project supports young tenants, many of them care leavers, in managing money and independent living. A Home Office funded project on burglary reduction is targeting single mothers, persuading them not to harbour culprits. Each of these employs two workers. The board works closely with a voluntary project, Winter Aid, where more able elderly people provide various forms of practical assistance to elderly people in need. Board members and others are involved in the usual variety of community activities.

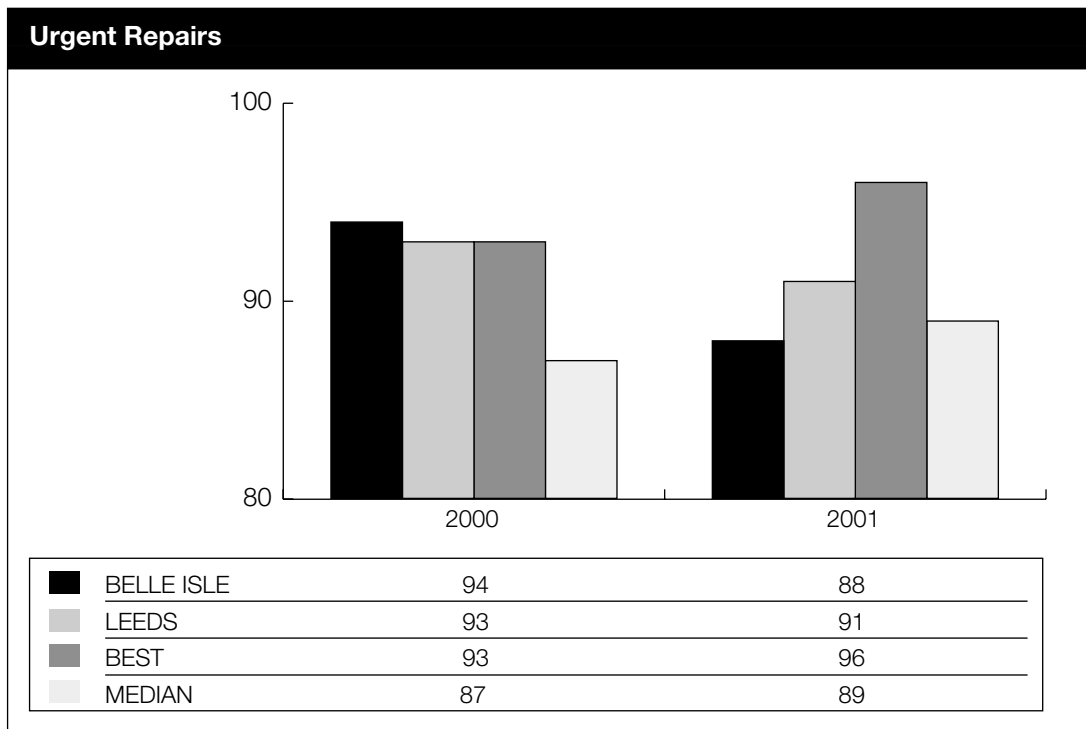
## Property

The estate, consisting of low-rise houses and flats, is typical of 1930s developments. Properties were modernised in the 1990s with Estate Action funding. There is thus little current capital investment although some works were carried out using the surplus they were able to generate by efficiencies on repairs.

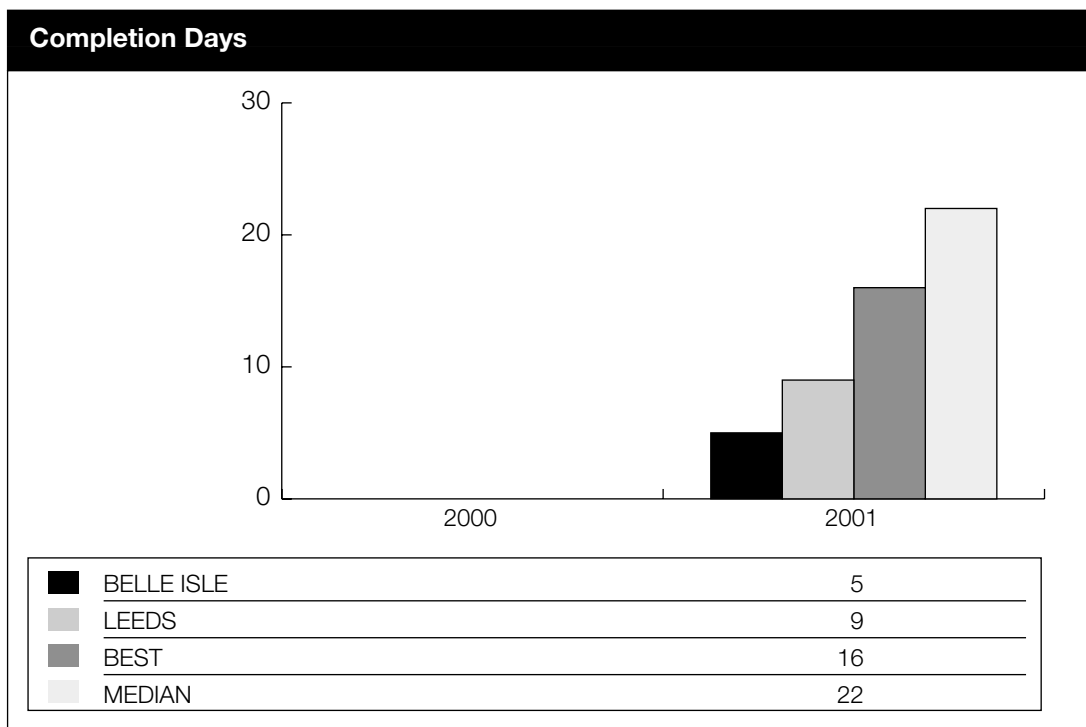
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

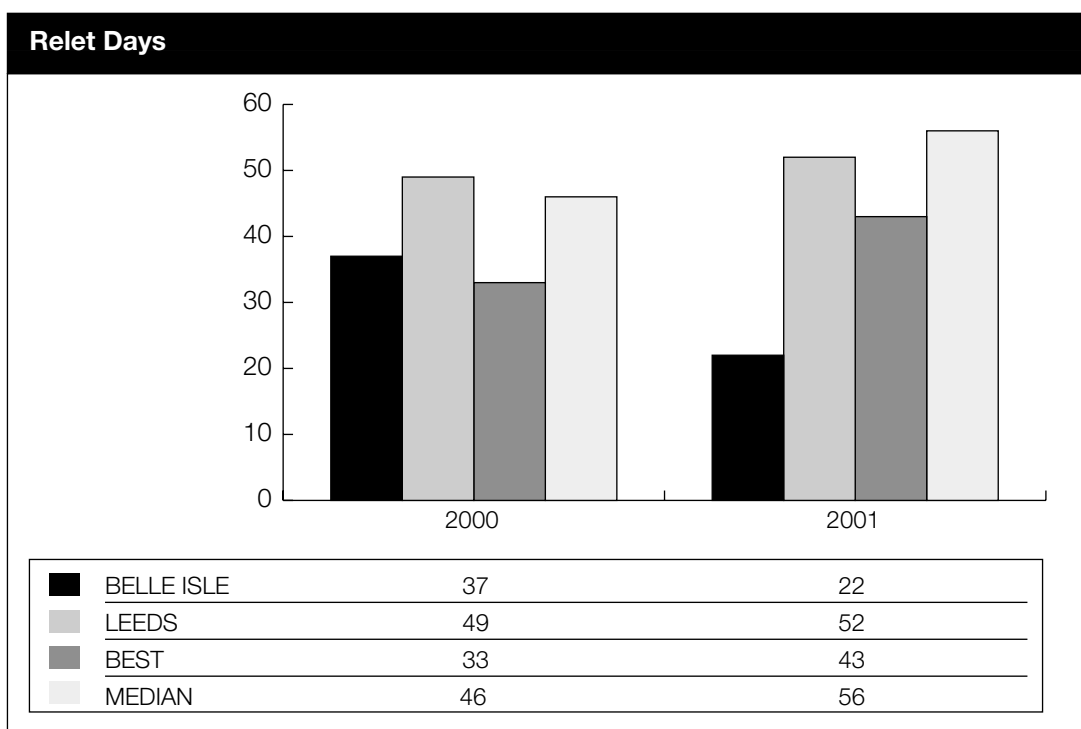
In 2000, the percentage of urgent repairs completed within government timescales was higher than the performance of the Local Authority, the Best and the Median. However, in 2001 the performance had deteriorated and the TMO had the lowest percentage of completions.



Data on the average number of days to complete non-urgent repairs are not available for 2000. In 2001 Belle Isle outperformed all of the other competitors.



The relet days for the TMO have reduced from 37 in 2000 to 22 in 2001. The TMO has outperformed the Local Authority and the Median in both years, and in 2001, its performance is better than the top quartile of Local Authorities.



## Tenant satisfaction

69% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 62% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 18% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 23% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 40% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 64% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

The EMB does not carry out formal tenant satisfaction surveys but the level of satisfaction can be gauged from the 95% vote for continuation of the EMB in 1999.

## Links to the Local Authority

The links arise in part from the dual accountability of the neighbourhood housing manager (see above), and from the presence of 2 councillors on the Board. Chief officers in various departments are described as supportive but some underlings do not trust tenants to manage. The slow reflexes of a large bureaucracy can lead to frustrations. Staff report that being an EMB is an advantage in getting other council departments to act, as well as outside agencies such as anti-drugs teams.

## Future Plans

Belle Isle North has united with Belle Isle South to form the Belle Isle Group which has served a Right to Manage notice to create a larger TMO. The intention is to manage the two together under a single Board. This would involve a renegotiated contract with the council. Discussions on this were at an early stage during the fieldwork period.

# Carlton Vale Residents Management Organisation Westminster City Council

## Background

Carlton Vale Residents Management Organisation is an inner-city TMO situated on the Maida Vale estate in the City of Westminster, established under the Right to Manage in 1997. The TMO covers 139 properties of which 73 have been sold.

The TMO was established as a result of promotion by the local authority and the positive example of a TMO on a neighbouring estate. Residents were concerned to prevent transfer of management responsibilities. There is an active residents' association for the whole of the Maida Vale estate.

## Organisation and staffing

There are 10 board members of whom 6 are leaseholders. There are no vacant seats. Nine of the members are women and three members are of black or ethnic minority origin. Most board members are over 50. The board meets monthly and there are social, repairs and personnel sub-committees. Only general meetings are open meetings.

The TMO employs a full-time manager based in a local office on the estate. Repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance are contracted out.

The TMO manager and chair have almost daily contact and estate inspections are carried out weekly with a couple of board members. The TMO has e-mail and internet access through the local authority system and has its own bank account.

In 1999, the TMO expanded its responsibilities to include more tenancy issues, voids, gas servicing, neighbour nuisance and maintenance of sheds, garages and parking areas. [check re bank account]

## Non-housing activities

The TMO organises weekly bingo and at least three outings a year for residents. There is a small budget for entertainment which covers events such as a Christmas party.

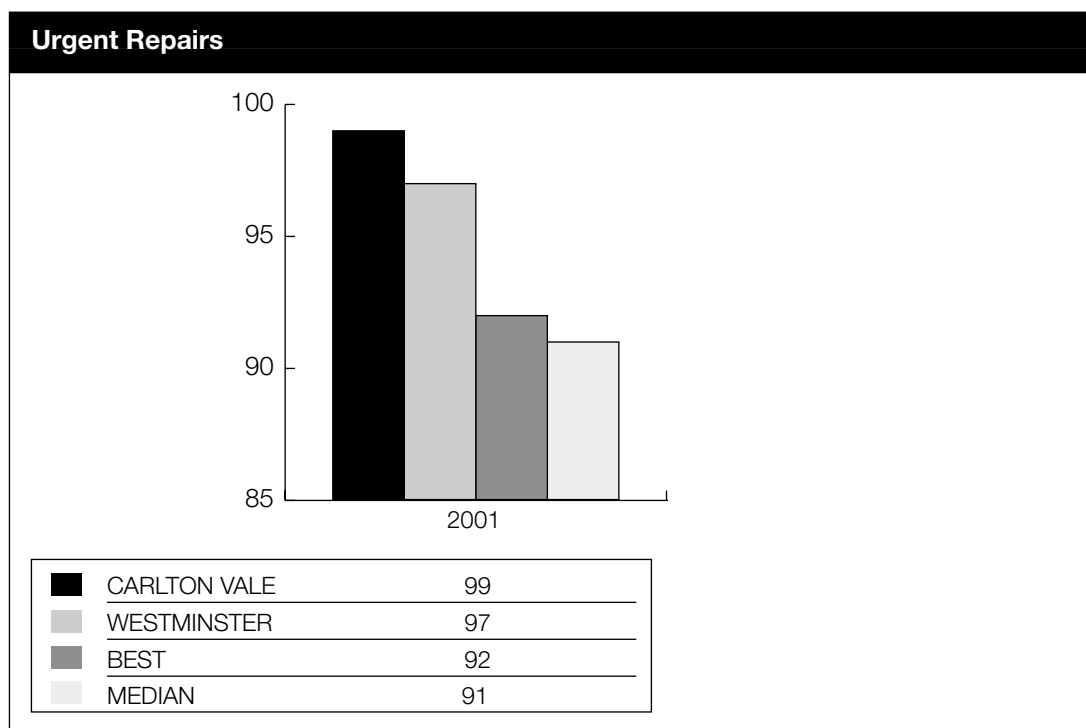
## Property

Carlton Vale is a 1960s estate composed of flats and maisonettes in 7 two and six-storey blocks. Garages on the estate need new roofs and doors and there will be negotiations with the council about the budget for this. The TMO has carried out rewiring and replaced front doors in all tenanted flats. Car parks have been refurbished.

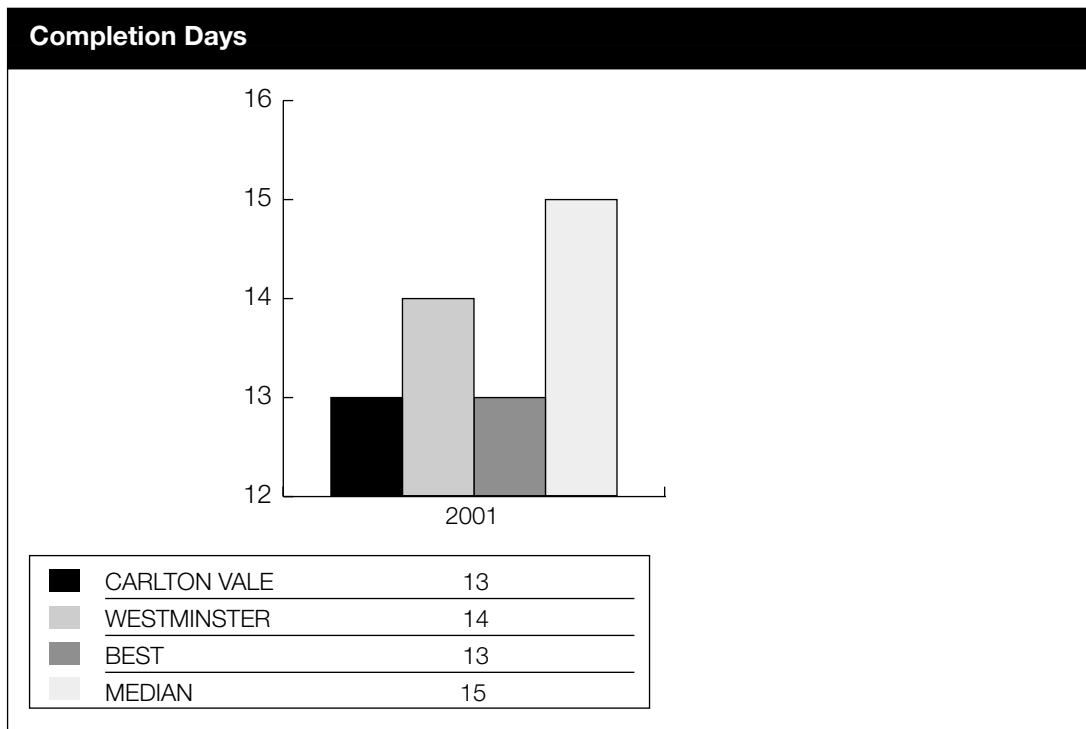
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	x

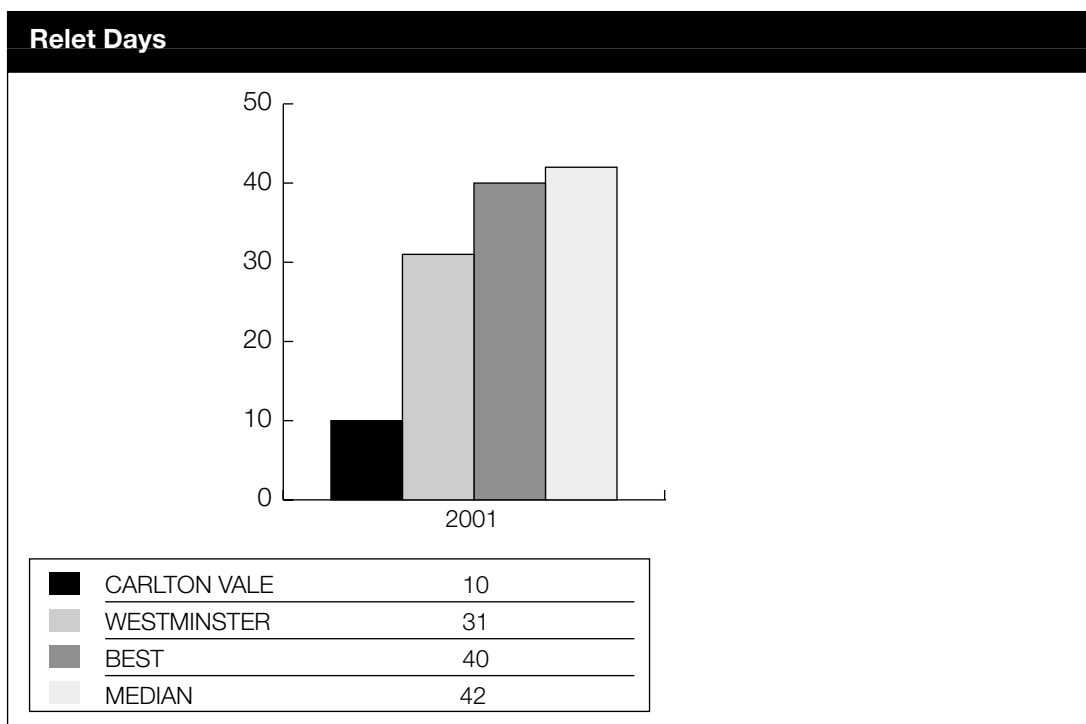
In 2001, the TMO completed 99% of urgent repairs within government timescales. This was better than the performance of the other comparators.



The average number of days taken by the TMO in 2001 to complete non-urgent repairs was 13 days. This is on a par with the performance of the Top Quartile and better than both the Local Authority and the Median. This bears out the view of the TMO that they completed repairs more quickly than the Local Authority.



The average number of days taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties in 2001 was 10 days. This was considerably better than the performance of the Local Authority and that of the Top Quartile and the Median.



## Tenant satisfaction

89% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 85% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 44% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 38% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 63% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 59% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links with local authority

The Council provides training and liaison through the seven strong Residents Choice team. The team also monitors TMOs and the TMO prepare a quarterly performance report. The local estate manager visits once a quarter and there is almost daily contact between the estate manager and the TMO manager.

The council convenes quarterly TMO forums which are chaired by a TMO representative. TMO staff are able to attend council staff training. The TMO manager is an ex-council employee with a knowledge of the workings of the local authority.

## Future plans

There are plans to refurbish stairwells and provide floor covering for balconies. There are no plans to increase responsibilities.

The Council is looking at setting up an arm's length management organisation and the TMO is involved.

# Cottington Close Tenant Management Organisation London Borough of Lambeth

## Background

Cottington Close Tenant Management Organisation is an inner-city TMO, established in the Kennington neighbourhood of the London Borough of Lambeth in 1995 under the Right to Manage. The TMO covers 247 properties: 201 are tenanted and many of the rest are sub-let.

The TMO was established in response to concerns about poor standards of service, especially repairs; a desire for influence over decisions about the estate; and a wish to remain council tenants in the wake of the 1988 Housing Act. There was an established tenants' association and some of the committee were originally TA members.

There was a 94% vote in favour of the TMO when it was established. At the continuation ballot in September 2001, this increased to 97.5% in favour with a 72.9% turn-out.

## Organisation and staffing

There are currently 10 board members and five vacant seats. Nine of the ten board members are women. There are no black or ethnic minority members of the board. The board meets monthly and there are five sub-committees: parking, rents, finance, maintenance and staffing. Attempts to involve more young and BME tenants have been unsuccessful.

Four housing management staff are directly employed based in an office on the estate. Repairs, grounds maintenance and cleaning are contracted out. These contracts are managed by an environmental officer.

The estate manager and chair have daily contact and estate inspections are carried out monthly. The TMO has e-mail and internet access through the local authority system.

Since establishment, the TMO has expanded its responsibilities to include capital works, lift maintenance, pavements, gardening and car parking. The latter generates an income. It has its own bank account.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO has little involvement in social and community activities over and above contributing to funds for a children's Christmas party. Proposals for a playwall on the estate had been not been approved.

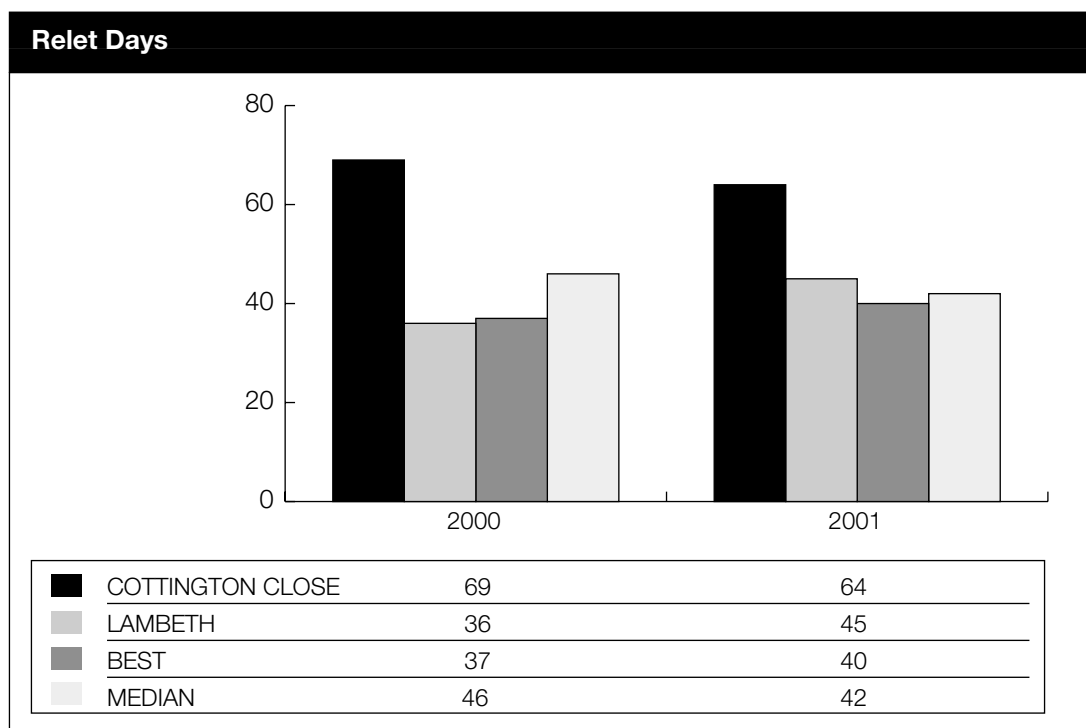
## Property

The estate is a mixture of 10 high and low-rise blocks, two built in the 1920s or 30s and the others in the 1950s. A programme of list replacement is scheduled for the current financial year with a capital programme of £1.1 million over the next five years.

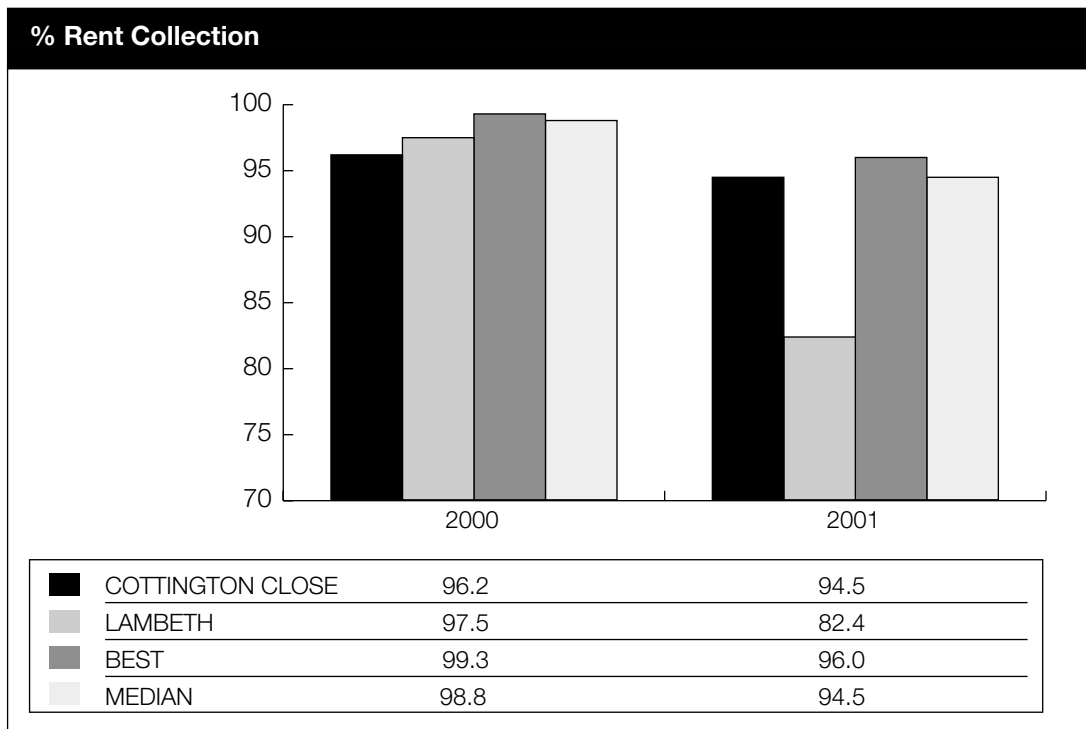
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

The average number of days taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties was 69 in 2000 and 64 in 2001. This is far higher than the time taken by the Local Authority and the other comparators.



The percentage rent collection by the TMO was slightly lower than the Local Authority in 2000 but was substantially better in 2001. The performance of both the TMO and the LA was not as good as the Best or the Median in both years.



The staff and board members felt that they provided a more responsive and accessible service: “we care about what we do. There’s nothing that can be bettered by the Neighbourhoods”.

## Tenant satisfaction

85% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 85% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 95% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 95% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 83% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 83% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links with local authority

The local authority provides training for staff and there are regular 6 weekly meetings between council and TMO staff. Some early hostility between council and TMO had reduced and relationships appeared to be improving. The estate manager is an ex-council employee and therefore has many contacts in the local authority.

## Future plans

Further environmental works are scheduled.

# Delves Tenant Management Organisation Walsall MBC

## Background

There are two TMOs covering the east and west of the Delves Estate in Walsall MBC. The estate is divided by the West Bromwich Road and by distinctive histories: Delves West was used for slum clearance, while Delves East was not.

Delves East TMO (or DEEM) was established in 1998 under the Right to Manage. It covers 180 properties, 18 of which have been bought. Delves West TMO (DEMO) was established in 1999 and covers 450 properties of which 74 have been bought. The original focus of the case study was Delves East, but the relationship with Delves West and sharing of staff and local office present an interesting and unusual arrangement.

DEEM emerged from an existing residents association concerned about poor standards of repairs and maintenance. Existing TMOs in Walsall provided a model of what could be achieved and residents contacted a number of Section 16 agencies. In Delves West, residents were concerned about increasing voids, poor repairs and a lack of facilities for local children.

## Organisation and staffing

There are currently 9 Delves East board members and no vacant seats. There are 3 men and 6 women on the board. All except two are aged 60 or above. There are no black or ethnic minority members of the DEEM board although there is one Asian member on the board of DEMO. Two DEEM board members are leaseholders. The board meets monthly and there are sub-committees for: allocations, finance, wages and employment. The TMOs hold a joint public meeting once every six months and produce a joint newsletter. More regular open meetings were dropped due to low attendance.

The TMO employs four housing management staff, a part-time book-keeper, full-time cashier and two handymen who cover repairs, emergencies and help with voids. They have their own workshop and stores at the back of the TMOs' office.

The chairs of both TMOs meet together with the estate manager once a week. The TMOs do not have internet access at present.

## Non-housing activities

The TMOs are involved in social events, community development, youth work and environmental initiatives. There is some overlap with the residents association which has campaigned for traffic lights, identislots for the elderly, a police sub-station, a health centre and funds for a youth club. The TMO had obtained funding for the removal of diseased trees, resurfacing of footpaths and a number of road safety improvements.

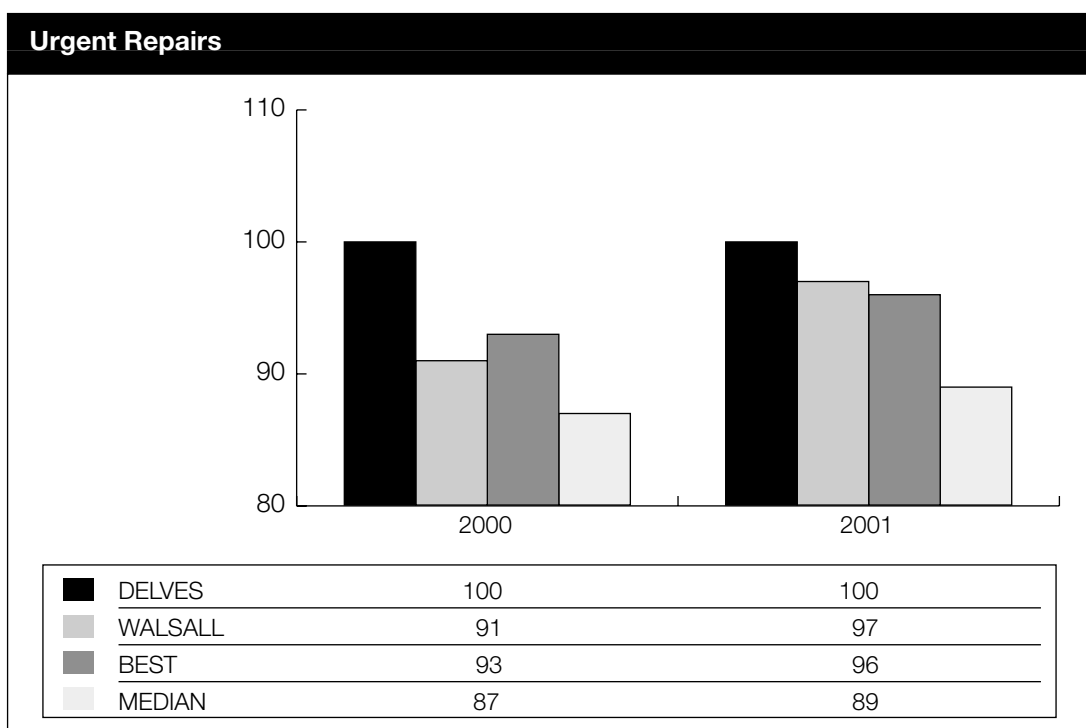
## Property

Both parts of the estate are pre-war houses. Delves East has undergone modernisation (unlike Delves West): the first phase before the Right to Manage, and the second phase during the setting up of the TMO.

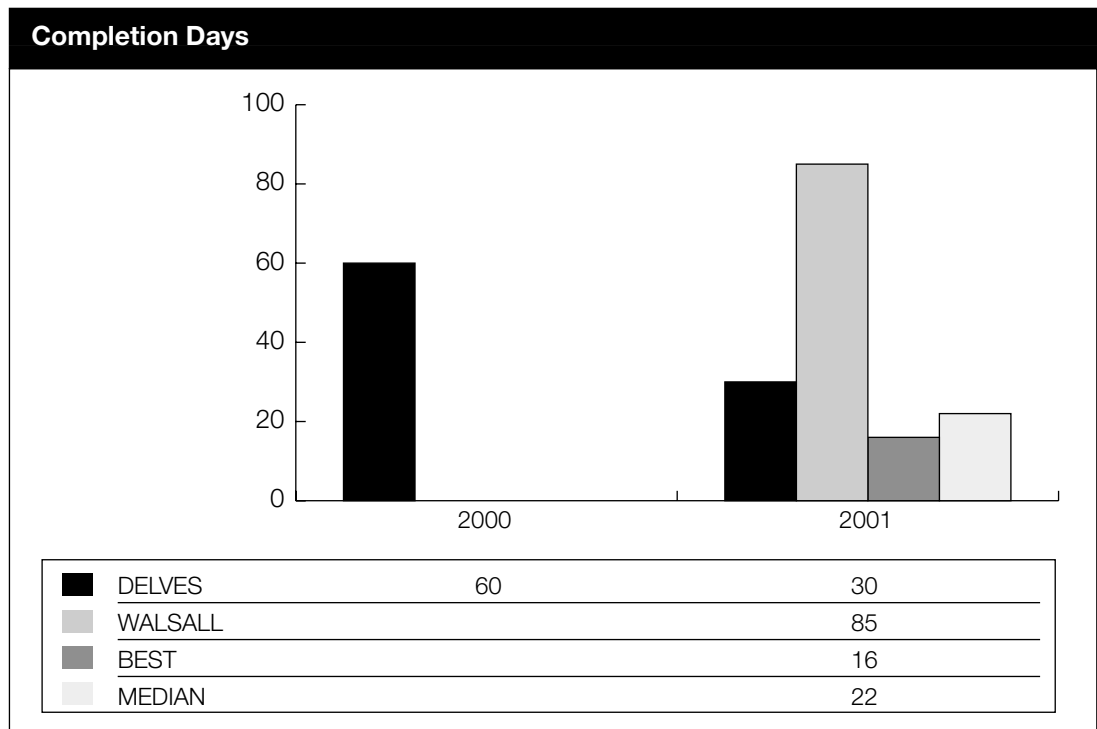
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

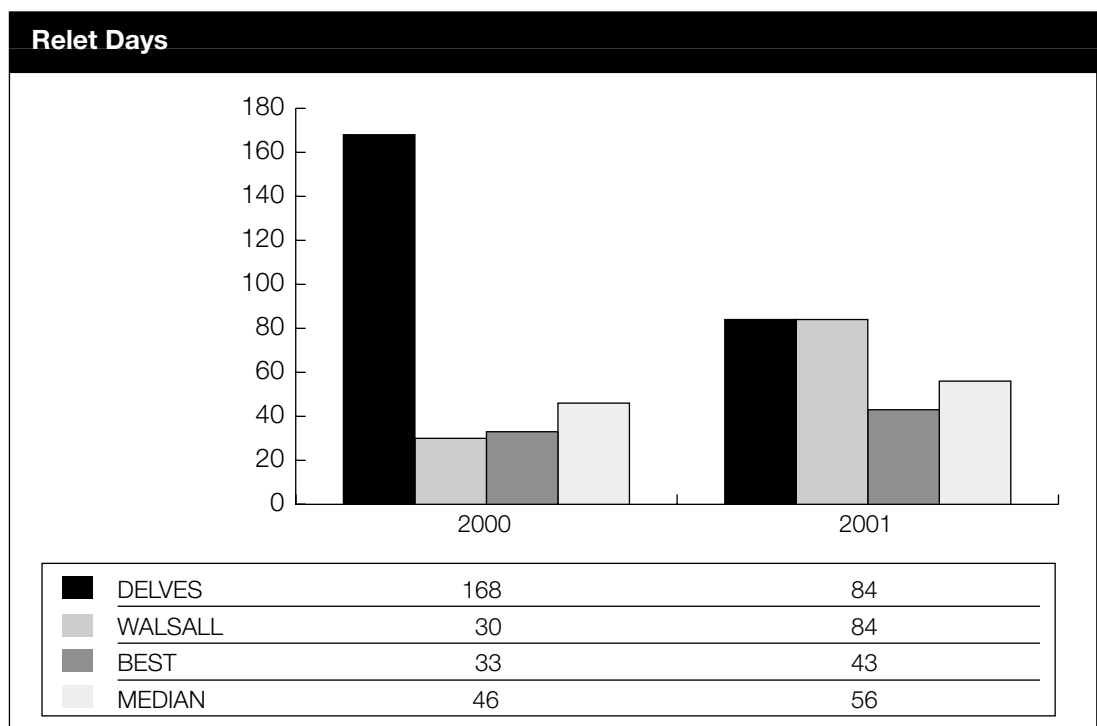
The TMO regards the improvement to the repairs service as one of its main achievements. All urgent repairs are carried out within government timescales. The TMO has outperformed the Local Authority the Median and the Top Quartile in both years.



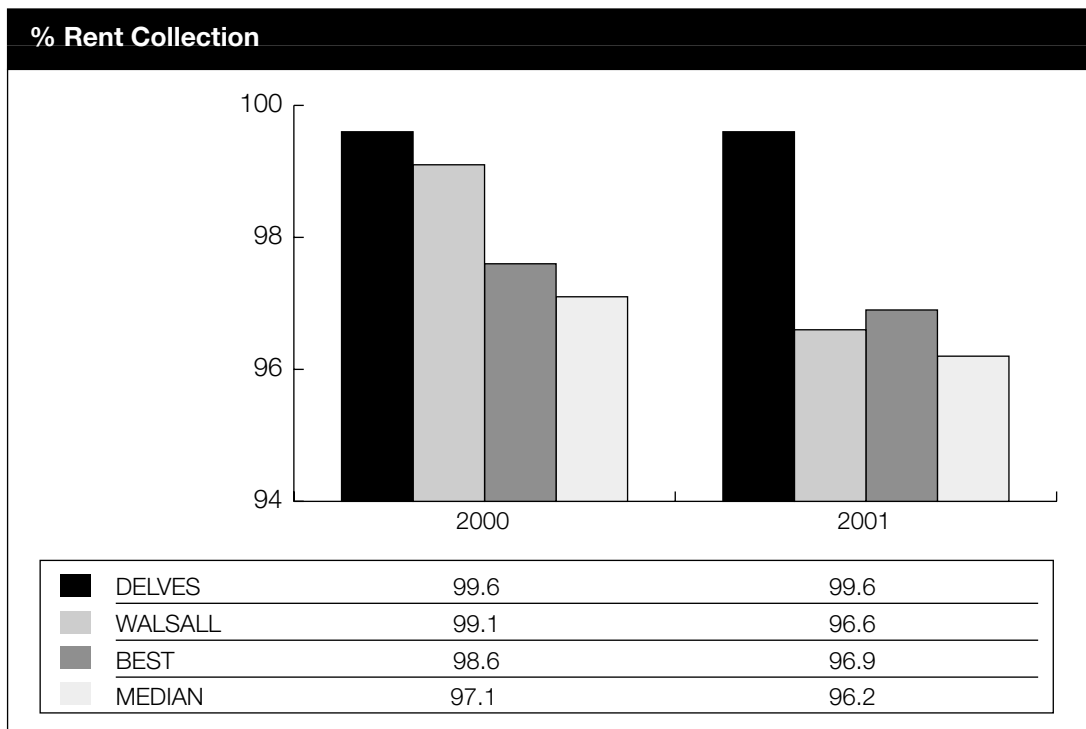
Data in respect of time taken to complete non urgent repairs is not available from the Local Authorities for 2000. In 2001, Delves does not achieve the performance levels of the Best or Median Local Authorities, but it far exceeds the performance of Walsall.



The average time taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties is 168 days in 2000, but reduces to 84 days in 2001. This reflects the perception that Delves is a hard to let estate. The improvement in the letting figures is due to the renegotiation of the lettings criteria with the Local Authority.



The rent collection figures show very little variation between the four comparators. In 2000 the TMO has the worst performance but in 2001 it is the best.



TMO interviewees felt the TMOs were doing well providing a better service and closer supervision of work: “The TMO is better because there are officers there with the authority to deal with grass roots there and then – and they can get advice if necessary on strategic matters...They don’t have to refer back to the council”.

## Tenant satisfaction

46% of Delves East residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 58% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 31% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 35% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 27% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 23% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

The local councillor reported that he had received no complaints about the TMOs unlike prior to their formation when he received regular complaints about the housing service. One interviewee commented: “if we have a complaint, then it’s dealt with – so we don’t keep a log. We don’t ignore people”.

## Links with local authority

The Council has actively encouraged the formation of TMOs. The local authority provides training to TMO members and there is a dedicated member of the Customer Involvement team who liaises with the TMO and attends AGMs. The council is trying to improve TMO monitoring and has introduced a standard monitoring form for all TMOs. The estate manager is an ex-council employee and consequently has a thorough working knowledge of the Council.

## Future plans

The TMO is a member of WATMOS – an organisation representing all the Walsall TMOs intending to take on the ownership of Walsall's TMO stock.

# Digmoor Estate Management Board West Lancashire District Council

## Background

Digmoor Estate Management Board was established in 1991 as part of an Estate Action programme in Skelmersdale, a new town in West Lancashire district. The EMB covers 827 properties and a number of owner occupied houses.

The Estate Action funding included £6 million for refurbishment and £3 million for improving communal areas, including demolition, measures to reduce crime and cladding of “Reema” properties.

Following restructuring of the housing department and the arrival of a new Housing Director, the EMB was undertaking an Options Study at the time of the case study.

## Organisation and staffing

There are currently 16 board members and three vacant seats. Ten of the board members are women. Three members are aged 60 or above. Three seats are for owner occupiers and six for councillors. There are no members of black or minority ethnic origin. The board meets monthly and holds quarterly open meetings.

The neighbourhood housing manager based in the neighbourhood office on the estate is seconded to the board. Other housing management staff cover the properties within the EMB and a wider area. The repairs service has been centralised. The EMB has its own office some distance from the neighbourhood office. It does not have its own bank account for management and maintenance purposes.

Since establishment, the board’s role has become limited to a monitoring role. For example, it is no longer involved in interviewing housing management staff.

## Non-housing activities

There is considerable overlap in membership between the EMB and the Community Centre. The EMB supports a Credit Union, a Food Co-op and a LETS scheme. It has also organised community clean-ups and summer holiday activities for children. Members sit on the local SRB board and the Council for Voluntary Service.

## Property

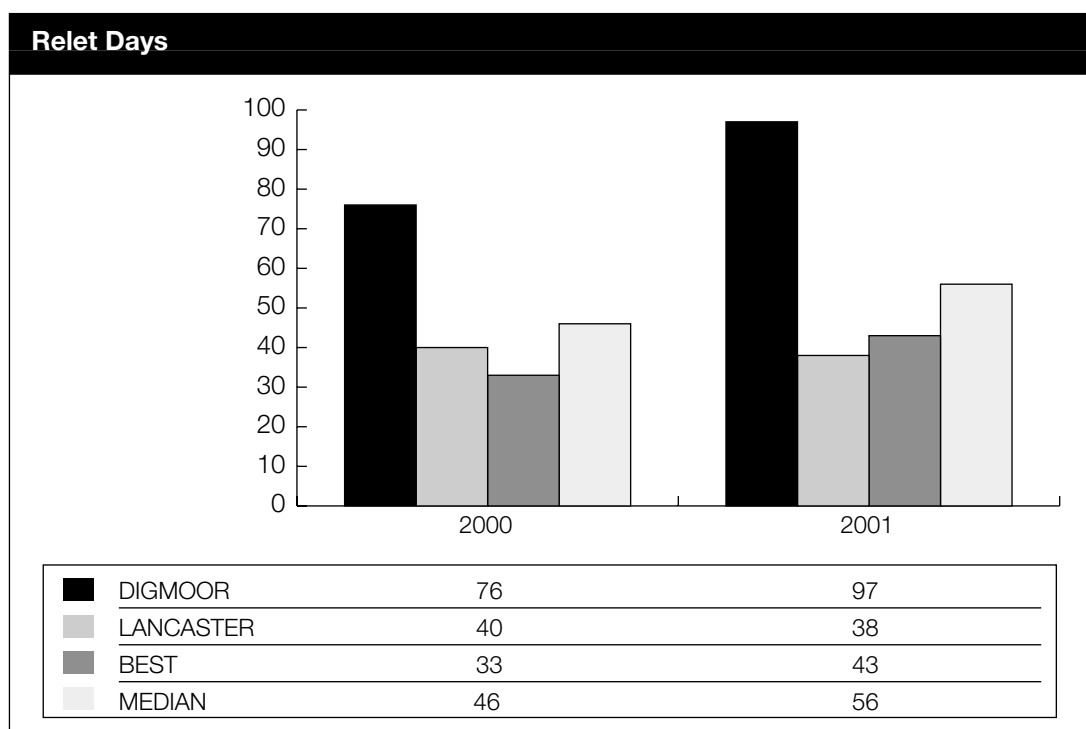
There are two types of property on Digmaor: brick built houses, more than half of which have been sold; and “Reema” houses using pre-cast reinforced concrete. The latter received considerable resources during Estate Action.

## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

The EMB’s control over these activities is limited to monitoring performance. Data in relation to repairs and rent collection are not available from Digmaor.

The average number of days taken by TMO to relet vacant properties was 76 in 2000 and 97 in 2001. This is far higher than for the other comparators and reflects the view of the TMO that early reductions in voids have now been reversed as the area is affected by falling demand.



The EMB has no control over the repairs budget apart from the ability to query items. Early reductions in voids have now reversed as the area is affected by falling levels of demand.

## Tenant satisfaction

65% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 56% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 29% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 31% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 25% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 19% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

A West Lancashire survey found higher levels of dissatisfaction with repairs (31%) than in the district overall (22%). 66% of Digmoor tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided by the landlord compared with 68% for the whole local authority area.

## Links with local authority

The links with the local authority have been variable. The council has now appointed a Tenant Participation Co-ordinator (a former Digmoor EMB board member) and provides training for tenants and residents. The council aims to assist three of the four West Lancashire EMBs (including Digmoor) to achieve TMO status under the Right to Manage.

## Future plans

The results of the Options Study will decide whether or not the EMB decides to embark on the Right to Manage.

# Dixon Clark Court Management Limited

## London Borough of Islington

### Background

Dixon Clark Court Tenant Management Limited is an inner-city TMO, situated at Highbury Corner in the London Borough of Islington and established under the Right to Manage in 1999. The TMO covers 60 flats in a 15 storey tower block, of which 12 have been sold under the Right to Buy. Some of these flats are now privately rented. An estimated 50% of residents are black or minority ethnic.

The TMO grew out of a pre-existing tenants' association following a borough-wide promotion of TMOs sponsored by the Council. Tenants were dissatisfied with the speed and quality of repairs, and housing management in general.

### Organisation and staffing

There are 9 board members of whom 7 are leaseholders. There are no vacant seats. Six members are female and there is one ethnic minority board member. The board meets monthly. Apart from the AGM, most meetings are not open. There are no sub-committees.

The TMO employs a part-time co-ordinator based in an office on the estate and contracts out cleaning and grounds maintenance. Since establishment, the TMO has handed back responsibility for voids management due to conflicts with the local estate manager over delays.

There is weekly contact between the co-ordinator and the chair. A couple of retired board members have more regular contact as cheque signatories. The TMO has its own bank account but does not have e-mail or internet access.

### Non-housing activities

The board has organised a limited number of social activities including a summer barbecue which attracted a wider group of residents than those involved in the board.

## Property

The block was built in the mid-1960s and has recently benefited from a refurbishment programme including the installation of security doors and exterior repainting. Problems with the lifts remain and will cost between £100,000 and £150,000 to replace.

## Performance

Performance data was available but not in a format comparable with best value performance information.

Board members felt they had been able to improve the speed and quality of day-to-day repairs.

## Tenant satisfaction

76% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 64% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 40% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 53% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 45% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 64% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

No formal complaints have been received by the TMO although it was unclear whether a formal complaints procedure existed.

## Links with local authority

The Council has actively encouraged the formation of TMOs. The local authority employs three full-time staff to promote and support tenant participation and tenant management. They also carry out a monitoring role. Relationships with these staff appeared good. There is more regular contact with local estate management staff and this appeared strained with disagreements over the boundary of responsibilities covered by the Modular Management Agreement.

## Future plans

The TMO is keen to take on allocations, although it thought the local authority was unwilling to agree to this. The TMO would also like control of parking on the estate: at present it is a source of friction with the local authority which uses some spaces for staff parking.

# Five Ways Tenant Management Co-op London Borough of Lewisham

## Background

Five Ways Tenant Management Co-operative is situated on the Milton Court Estate in Lewisham. It was established under the Right to Manage in 1994. The TMO covers 201 properties, 100 of which are LA stock and 101 which belong to Family Housing Association. A number of properties have been sold under the Right to Buy legislation, amounting to about twelve per cent of the stock.

The estate in which Five Ways is situated received Estate Action funding in the mid-90s: seven tower blocks, one of which was managed by Five Ways, were demolished, and new properties were built by Family Housing Association. Opposition to some of the council's demolition plans provided part of the motivation to set up the TMO. Other factors were dissatisfaction with the council's consultation record and concern about the reputation and condition of the estate.

## Organisation and staffing

There are 12 committee members, of whom 3 are owner-occupiers/lease-holders, and there are no vacant seats. Men and women are equally represented on the committee; 4 members are of black or ethnic minority origin. Two of the committee are aged over 60, 9 are in the 40-59 age-group and 1 in the 20-39 age-group. The management committee meets fortnightly, alternating Maintenance and Employment, with Finance. There are no sub-committees. Members are invited to open committee meetings three times a year.

The TMO employs 5 members of staff: a full-time housing manager, a part-time administrator, a maintenance worker and 2 part-time cleaners. Grounds maintenance and electrical work is contracted out.

The TMO office is based on the ground floor of the main block in the scheme, and staff and committee members have frequent contact. The TMO has e-mail and internet access.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO is well-situated for local facilities. The committee organises social events every couple of months, eg Karaoke sessions and quiz nights.

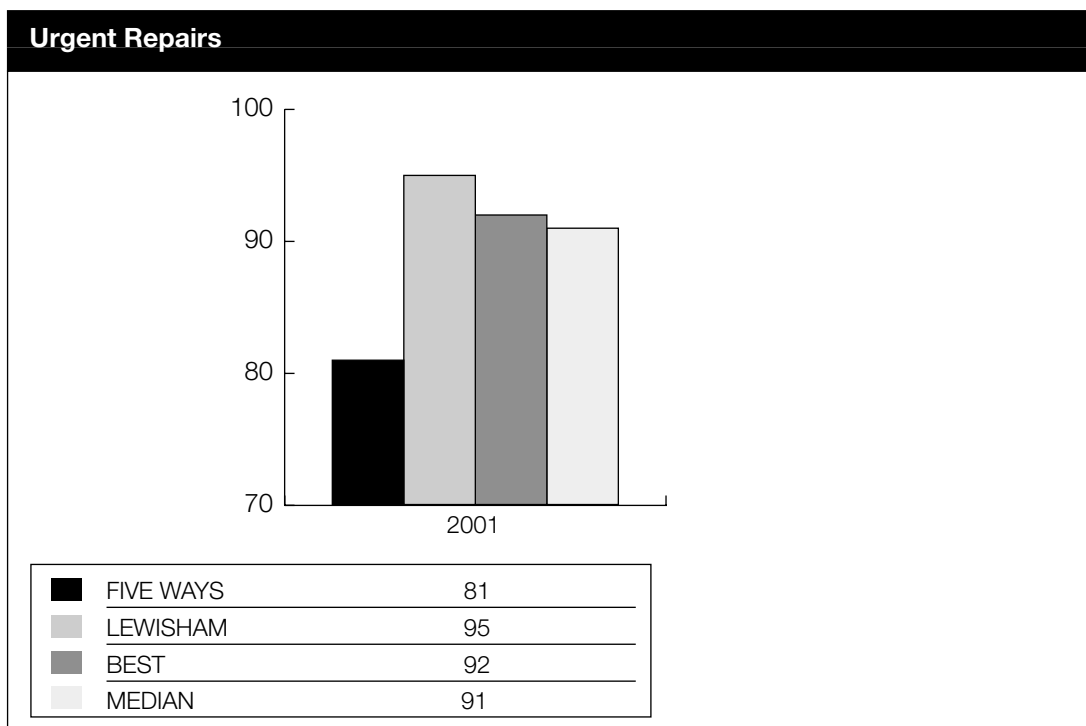
## Property

Five Ways consists of two 8 storey blocks built in the 1960s, 30 semi-detached and terraced houses built in the 1940s, and 10 flats and houses built in the 1990s. There are also three four-bedroomed wheelchair accessible properties. Properties have benefited from Estate Action funding providing new kitchens, security doors and conservatories

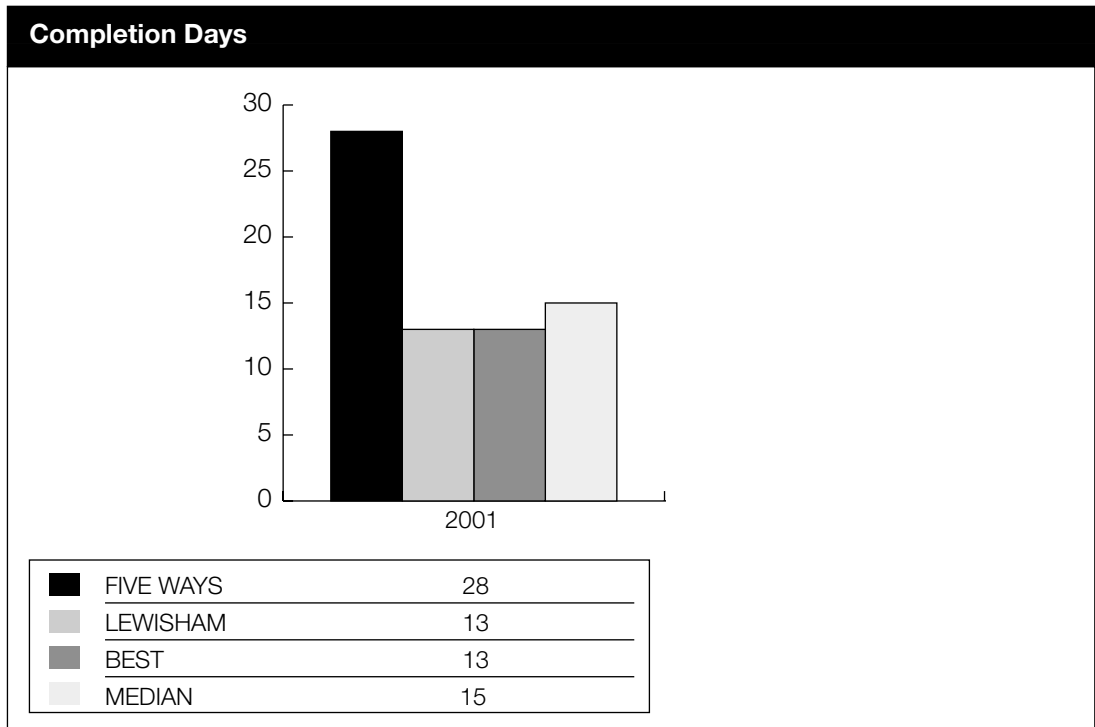
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

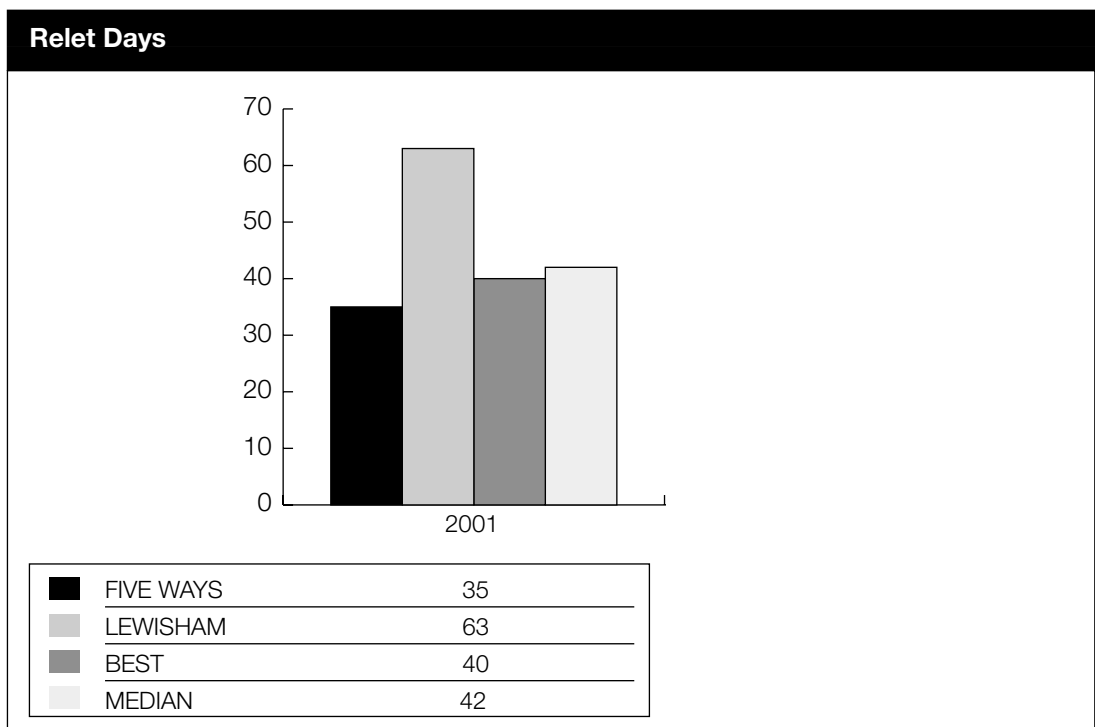
The TMO performance on urgent repairs is lower than the Local Authority and also the top 75% of all London Local Authorities.



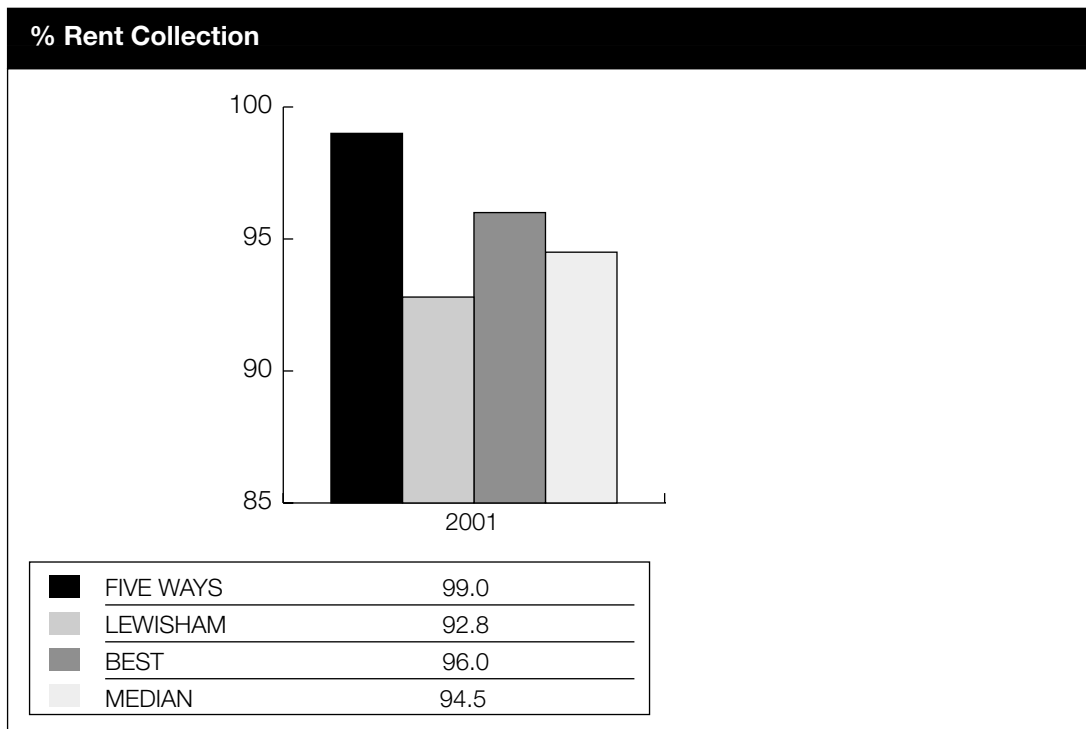
The average number of days taken by the TMO to complete non urgent repairs is considerably higher than the local authority and the top 75% of London authorities.



The average number of days taken to let vacant properties is 35 which outperforms the local authority, the top quartile and median for the year ended March 2001.



The percentage of rent collected in 2001 is 99%, which is better than the Local Authority, the Top Quartile and the Median.



## Tenant satisfaction

90% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 95% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 62% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 69% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 62% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 62% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

The Council has 4 established TMOs and 1 at the feasibility stage. One officer is employed to assist with the development and support of TMOs and the council is currently preparing a promotional exercise for TMOs. There is a TMO liaison forum for committee members (initiated by Five Ways) and a forum for workers is in the process of being set up. The training provided by the local authority for its own housing staff is also available to TMOs.

## Future plans

The TMO plans to take on 100-200 new local authority properties. A TPAS consultant has been hired to report on this.

# Glebe Gardens Management Board Richmond Housing Partnership

## Background

Glebe Gardens Management Board Limited is an outer city TMO, established in the London Borough of Richmond in 1999 under the Right to Manage. In July 2000, the TMO stock was transferred to Richmond Housing Partnership through a large scale voluntary transfer. The TMO covers 102 properties of which 18 are leasehold. There are also 42 freeholders on the estate.

The estate was originally part of the larger Butts Farm estate but is separated from it by a trunk road. After the collapse of a communal garage area, a local councillor helped local residents set up a residents association and told the residents about TMOs. The residents successfully pressed for a new name for the estate and set up a TMO out of dissatisfaction with the housing management and maintenance service and the poor physical appearance of the estate.

There was a 90% vote in favour of the TMO when it was established.

## Organisation and staffing

The TMO has 12 board members and no vacant seats. Seven board members are women. There are no black or ethnic minority members of the board. Most are below retirement age. There are three leaseholders and one owner occupier on the board. Rules allow for co-option but there are no co-opted members. The board meets roughly once every 8 weeks and general meetings are held every 6 months. All meetings are open.

A part-time coordinator; a cleaner/caretaker; a maintenance worker/handyman and gardener are employed by the TMO based in an office on the estate.

The chair has daily contact with the co-ordinator and was himself the co-ordinator in the first months after set up. The TMO has e-mail and internet access and its own bank account.

## Non-housing activities

There is some overlap with the residents association which manages the community centre where the TMO office based. The residents association organises social activities and obtained lottery funding for a play area. The TMO has made money available for each block to spend on environmental improvements such as planting and benches.

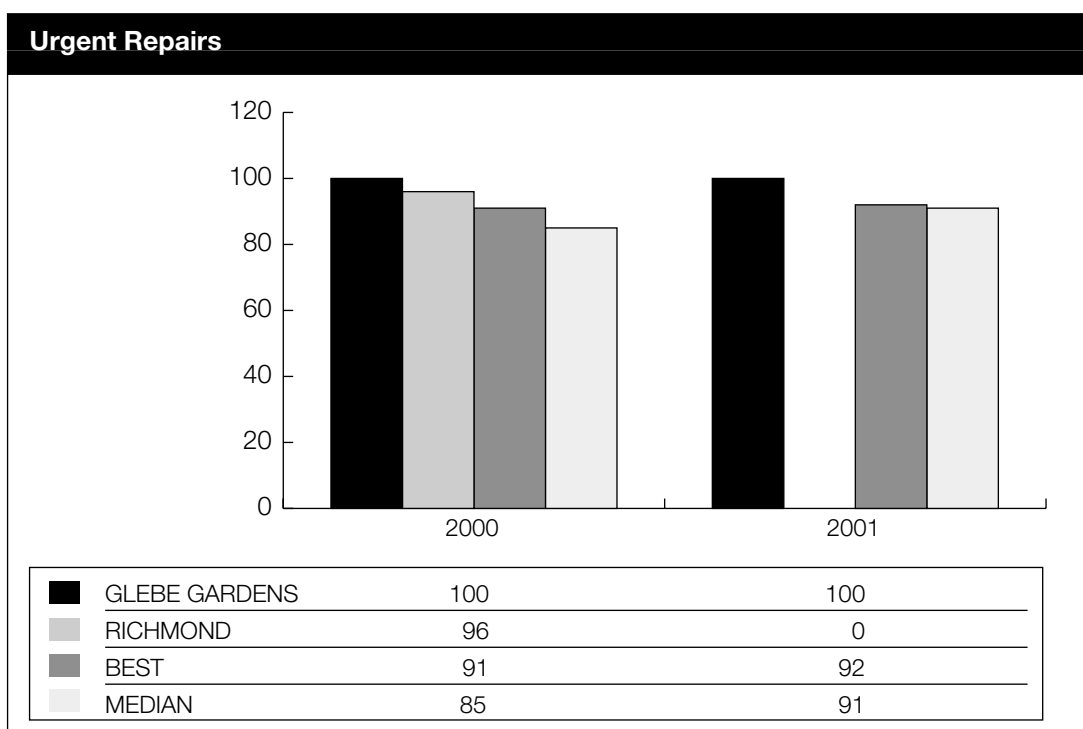
## Property

The estate was built in the 1950s and is composed of houses with blocks of low-rise flats and maisonettes. Some of the buildings require major repairs and the landlord has a long-term plan for the necessary capital works. There are particular problems with leaking bin-sheds and roofs over entrances to the blocks.

## Performance

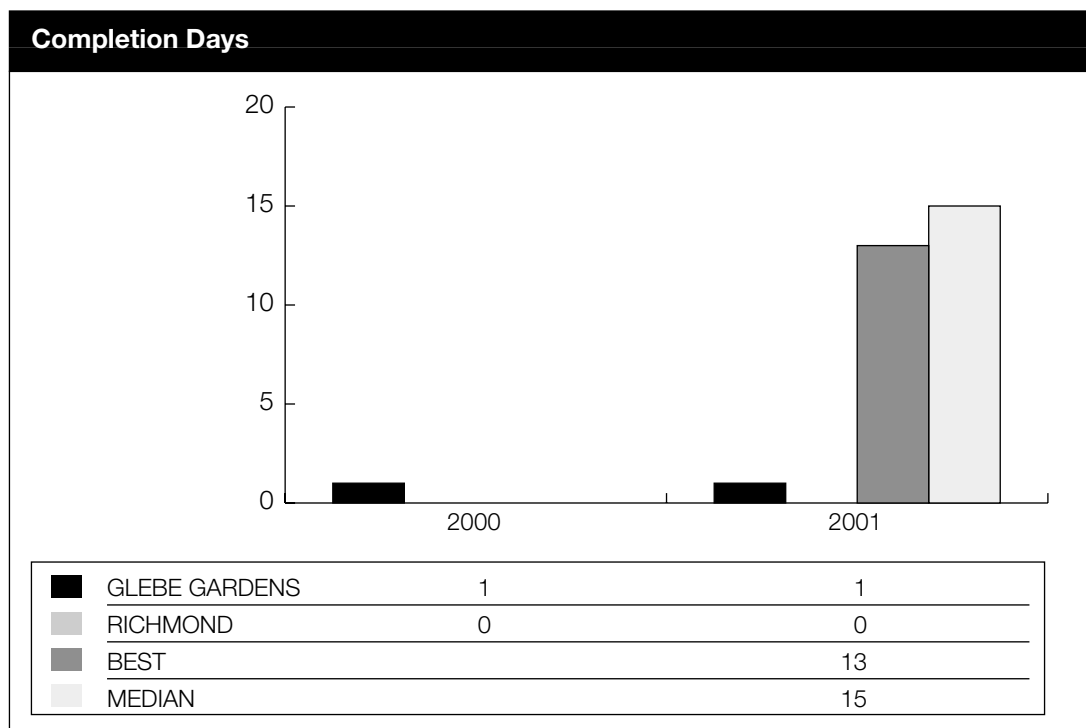
Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✗	✗

The TMO completed all urgent repairs within government timescales. In 2000 the local authority completed 96% of urgent repairs within government timescales which was in the top quartile of local authorities for that year. In July 2001 the housing properties of the London Borough of Richmond inc. Glebe Gardens were transferred to an RSL. As a result there are no figures available for year ended March 2001 from the local authority.



The TMO states that most non-urgent repairs are completed on the day in which they are reported. There have been some delays where they have had difficulties in getting replacement parts, especially for communal light fittings. The average number of days for completion is far better than for local authorities. This is borne out by the findings of the tenant survey which found that 100% of residents felt that repairs were dealt with promptly and they were satisfied with the result.

The neighbouring estate provides a stark contrast to Glebe Gardens. TMO members identified repairs, budget management and the friendly service as areas of improved performance.



## Tenant satisfaction

90% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 80% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 47% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 50% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 55% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 50% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

A TMO residents survey found 88% of respondents thought the estate had improved since the TMO took over.

## Links with local authority and Housing Association

The housing association employs a liaison officer who attends board meetings. Contact tends to be as and when required, for example, legal, financial and personnel advice is available on request. A modular management agreement with the new landlord had not been signed when the case study visit was carried out.

## Future plans

There are no plans to expand TMO responsibilities. Other social landlords had leafleted residents about the possibility of selling their properties. TMO members were concerned that this could dilute the number of residents actively involved and lead long-term to the folding of the TMO.

# Grosvenor and Regency Management Organisation Westminster City Council

## Background

Grosvenor and Regency Management Organisation is an inner-city TMO, established in 1998 under the Right to Manage in the City of Westminster. The TMO covers 874 flats of which 253 have been sold under the Right to Buy. An estimated 25% of residents are of black or minority ethnic origin.

The TMO was set up partly in response to a proposed transfer of management to the Peabody Trust, partly through the encouragement of a local councillor, and partly the example of other Westminster TMOs providing a model of what could be achieved in terms of reducing costs and improving the estate. There was an already established tenants and residents association which has since folded.

## Organisation and staffing

There are 8 board members. There are six women on the board and three members are of black or ethnic minority origin. Most of the members are retired. There are four sub-committees: finance, gardening, personnel and staffing, children and parenting. There is also a leaseholders action group. The board meets monthly and tries to hold four open meetings a year.

The TMO directly employs 12 staff in an office on the estate including a surveyor and three maintenance officers. All of the maintenance staff are currently estate residents. Caretaking, cleaning and some repairs are contracted out.

There is regular contact between board members and staff: four members see staff twice a week and the treasurer visits weekly. The TMO has e-mail and internet access through the local authority system.

Since establishment, the TMO expanded its responsibilities to include grounds maintenance. The TMO has its own bank account.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO undertakes a wide range of community activities including: Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for a part-time youth worker, a new playground, a cultural resource centre which includes English classes and a crèche, a DJ mixing room for young people, an IT

resource centre with free training available to residents, regular social events, provision of pot plants and planting boxes at a summer planting day.

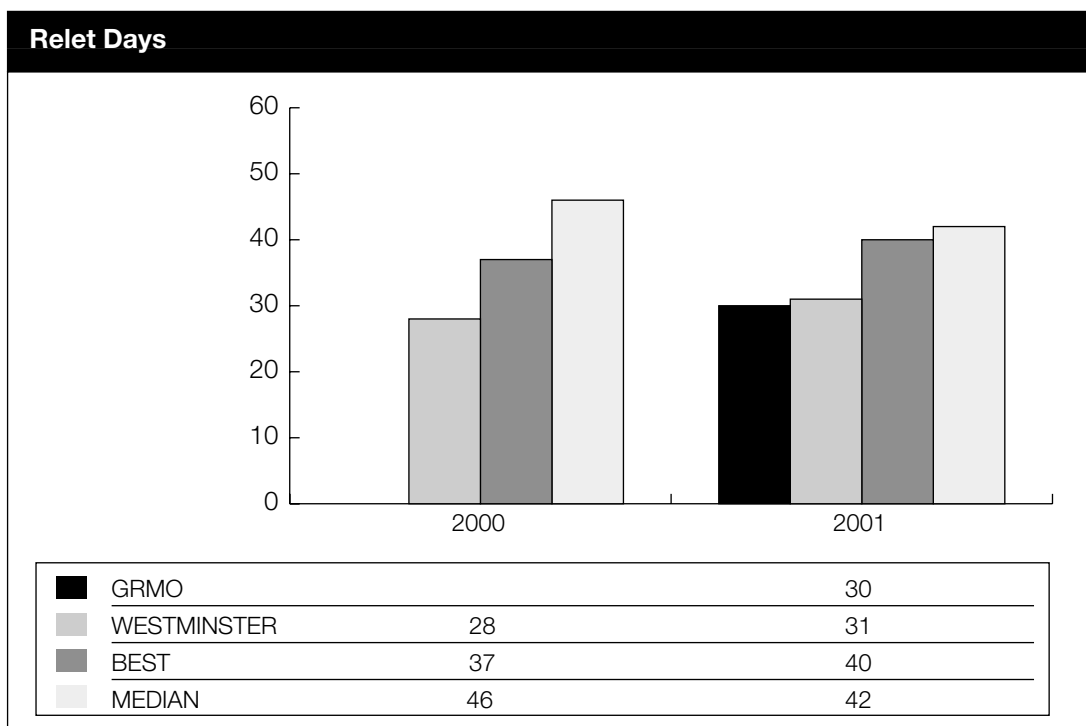
## Property

The estate is composed of eleven six-storey blocks, designed by Lutyens and grade II listed. Some blocks have a unique checkerboard design and these blocks, in particular, have high repair costs due to the poor quality of previous refurbishment. The main problems are poor bathrooms and kitchens and obsolete boilers.

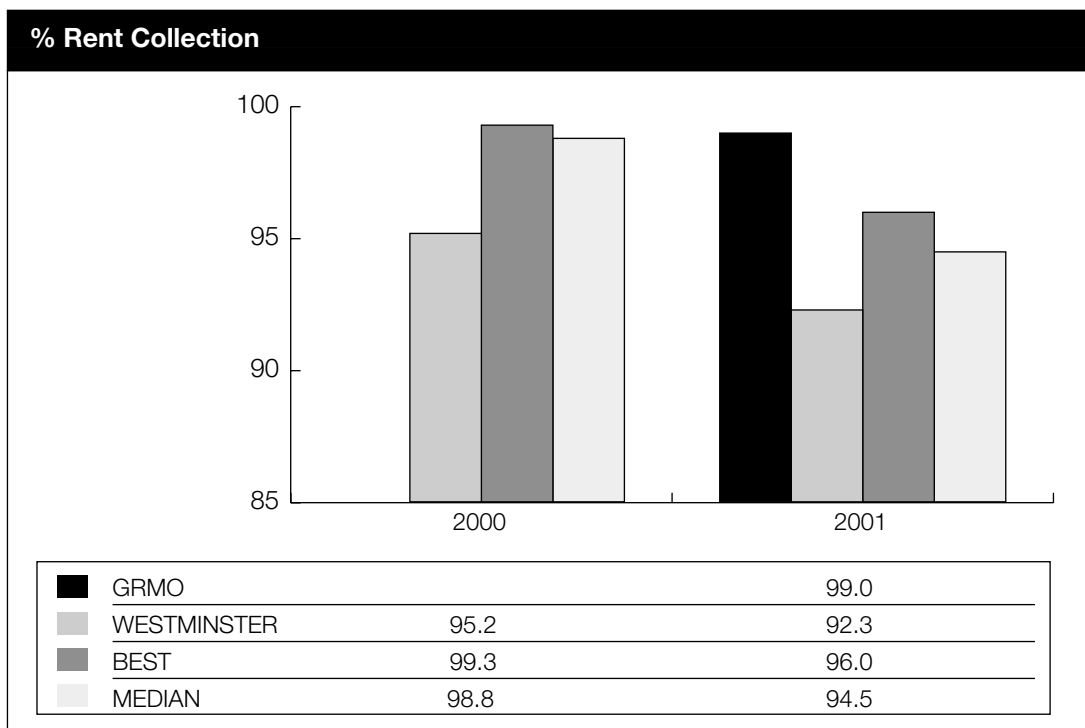
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

The average number of days taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties in 2001 was 30 days. This was better than the performance of the local authority and that of the top quartile and median.



The percentage of rent collected in 2001 by the TMO was 99%. This was higher than the local authority and the top quartile of local authorities.



Board members and staff felt that the TMO was doing well, although there was still more to be done.

A Best Value Performance Review of repairs and maintenance had begun prior to the case study visit

## Tenant satisfaction

79% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 74% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 38% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 39% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 54% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 57% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

The TMO conducts regular surveys of satisfaction which have resulted in changes to the cleaning contract and other services.

## Links with local authority

The Council provides training and liaison through the seven strong Residents Choice team. The team also monitors TMOs and the TMO prepare a quarterly performance report. The council convenes quarterly TMO forums which are chaired by a TMO representative. TMO staff are able to attend council staff training. The estate director is an ex-council employee and has very good links with the local authority.

## Future plans

The TMO is considering extending its services to include charging out repairs to lessees.

# Heath Town Estate Management Board Wolverhampton City Council

## Background

Heath Town EMB is an inner-city TMO, situated about a mile from Wolverhampton city centre. It was established in 1996 under the Right to Manage. The TMO covers 1,180 units, of which 150 are designated for asylum seekers.

The TMO was set up partly in response to Tenants Choice legislation and partly because of major concerns over safety and security on the estate. There were riots in the late 1980s and early 1990s during which the housing office was burnt down.

## Organisation and staffing

There are twelve board members, all of whom are tenants, and four vacancies. There are seven women on the board and five men and four members of black or ethnic minority origin. Four of the Board members are aged over 60, three are in the 40-59 age-group, and five in the 20-59 age-group. There are eight sub-committees: maintenance and development, marketing, treasury, environmental, community, youth, housing management and IT. The board meets bi-monthly and all meetings are open to tenants.

The TMO directly employs 25 staff and seconds 22 from the local authority. It carries out repairs and grounds maintenance in-house, and cleaning is done by the council. The local authority is responsible for external capital works and major repairs and the TMO for exterior painting and internal works. The main EMB office is situated in the middle of the estate and there are also 3 patch offices. The TMO has e-mail and internet access.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO undertakes a very wide range of community activities and employs or seconds a number of members of staff to manage these. It has recently been particularly active in supporting its asylum seeker tenants. It also manages a number of community-use buildings and has succeeded in having a police substation established on the estate.

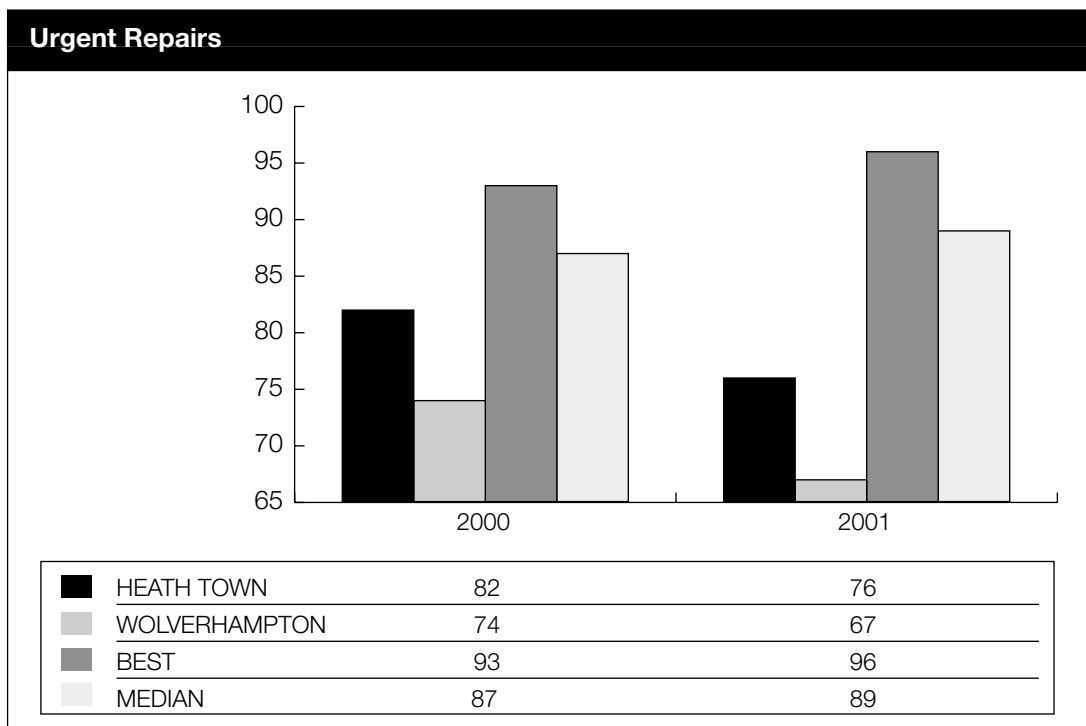
## Property

The estate, built in the 1960s, consists of high-rise blocks and deck-access maisonette blocks. There is asbestos in all the blocks that is difficult to remove and a great deal of money is required to either demolish the blocks or bring them up to standard. The TMO also manages the estate shopping precinct and a number of other facilities.

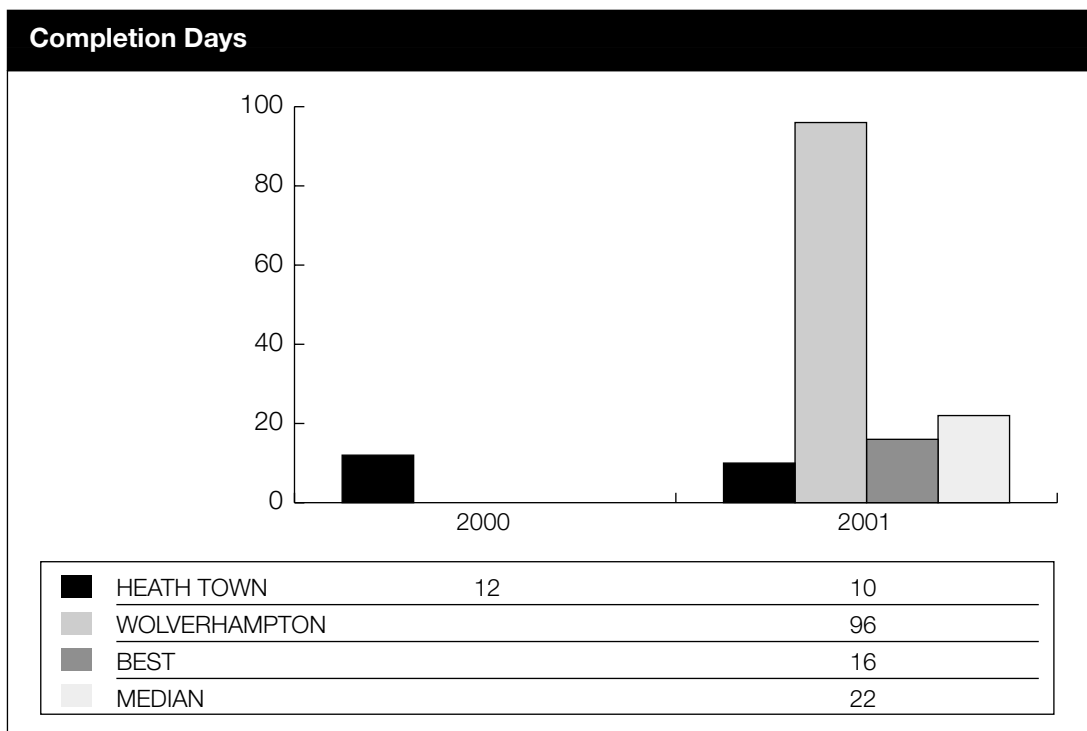
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

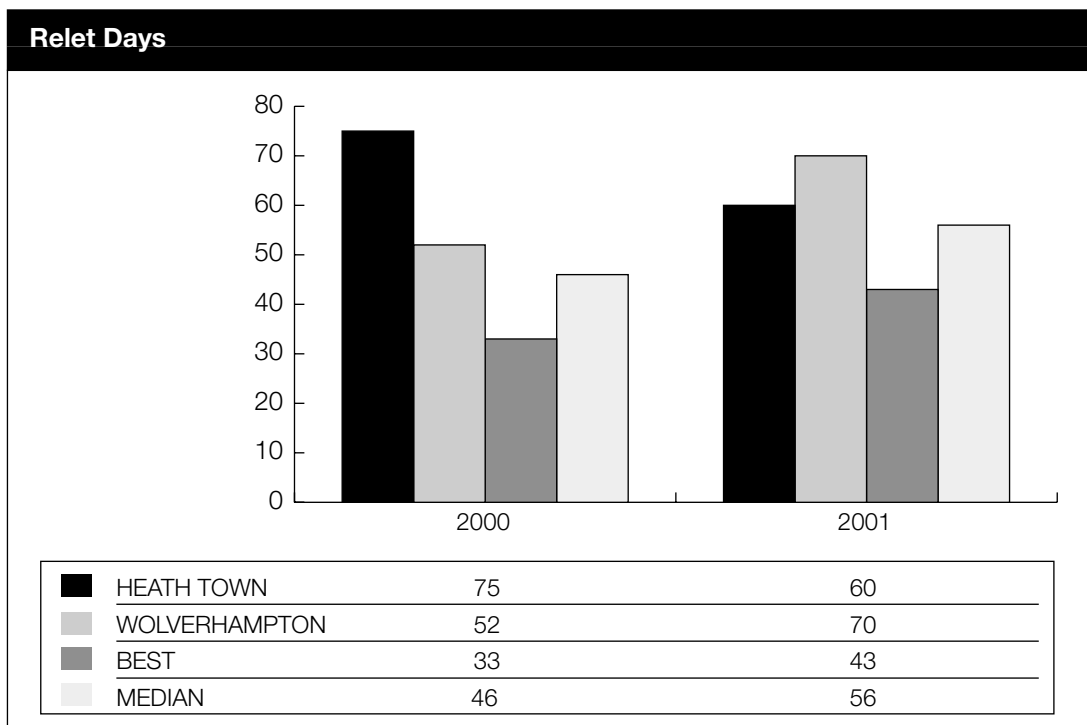
82% of urgent repairs were completed within government timescales by the TMO in 2000 and 76% in 2001. This is lower than the Top Quartile and the Median for both years but is better than the Local Authority.



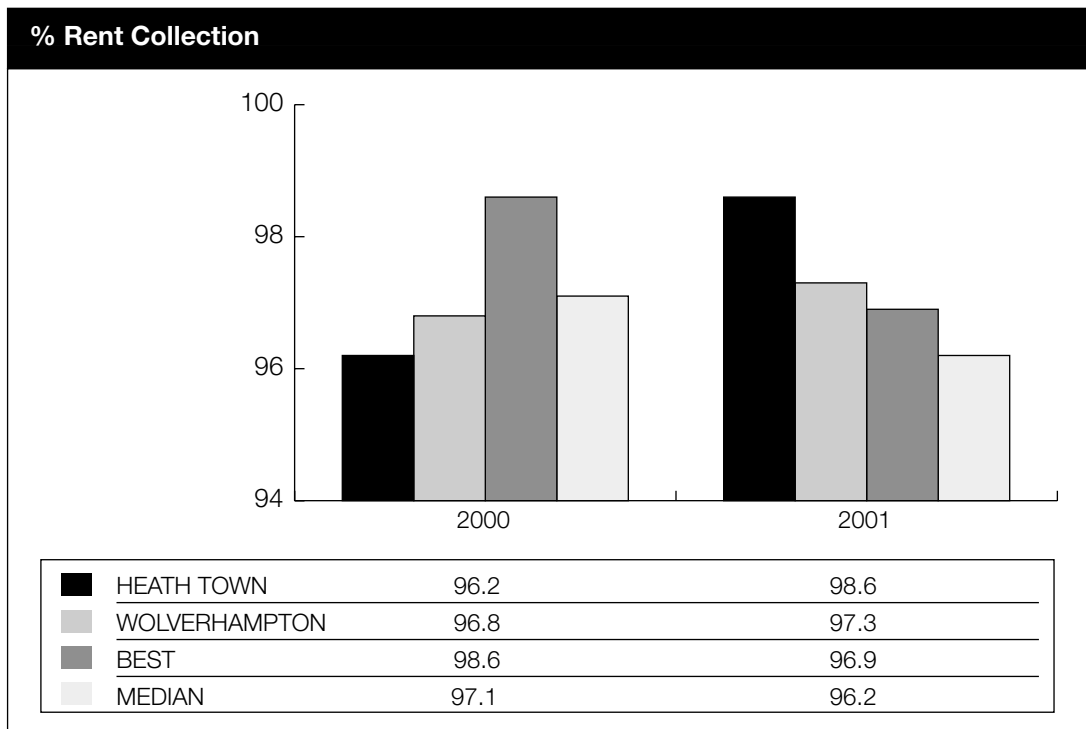
The average number of days taken in 2001 to complete non-urgent repairs is better than the Top Quartile and the Median. The data relating to the Local Authority may be inaccurate.



The number of days taken by the TMO to relet vacant properties is 75 days in 2000 and reduced to 60 days in 2001. This reflects the view of the TMO that the stock is difficult to let, especially the high-rise blocks. In 2001 the TMO performance on lettings surpassed that of the Local Authority.



The percentage of rent collected by the TMO in 2001 shows a marked increase from the previous year. In 2000 the TMO performance was the worst of the group, but by 2001 it was the best.



## Tenant satisfaction

65% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 44% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 20% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 26% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 31% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 30% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

There are three other established TMOs and two in development in the borough. The Council seconds 24 staff to TMOs and employs 6 specialist staff for the development and support of TMOs. It also provides all central services, legal, payroll, etc, paid for through allowances. LA staff training and general tenant-training courses are available to TMOs.

## Future plans

The TMO is looking at various long-term stock issues with the Local Authority.

# Kerridge Court London Borough of Islington

## Background

Kerridge Court residents served a Right to Manage notice on the London Borough of Islington in 1998 and is now in the development stage. It is an inner-city estate covering 130 dwellings in low-rise flats and maisonettes. There are a small number of leaseholders on the estate.

The developing TMO has emerged from a pre-existing tenants association which had been formed to campaign for new windows and following an approach from a Section 16 agency.

The main problems identified on the estate were: poor repairs and estate cleaning, and car parking.

The first ballot at the feasibility stage yielded 92% of tenants in favour of a TMO with a nearly 100% turn-out.

## Organisation

There are 10 committee members of whom two are of black or ethnic minority origin. Nine of them are aged under 60 and nine of them are tenants. The committee meets monthly and meetings are open to all tenants.

The TMO plans to convert a flat on the estate into a local office and to employ an office manager and a caretaker/cleaner.

## Non-housing activities

The committee hoped to undertake some social activities once established. In the past, the tenants association had organised events for children and a bicycle workshop for young people funded by the local Health Action Zone.

## Property

The estate is a 1950s low-rise brick built estate around a central courtyard. It was planned to contract out the repairs service.

## Performance

Not applicable.

## Tenant satisfaction

Not applicable.

## Links with local authority

The TMO liaison officer had attended all meetings at the feasibility stage and there was regular contact with him. The local area housing management officer had been unable to attend the committee meetings.

There was some suspicion that the local authority was neglecting the estate in the expectation that the TMO would be taking on responsibility in the near future for repairs and cleaning.

## Future plans

The committee hoped to be able to achieve significant improvements in service once established as a TMO.

# RouPELL Park Residents Management Co-operative London Borough of Lambeth

## Background

RouPELL Park is a high-rise estate in inner-city London. It was originally owned by Wandsworth Borough Council but in 1964 was taken over by Lambeth. The TMO covers 498 units, including 38 properties sold under the Right to Buy. It was established in 1996 under the Right to Manage. The TMO was set up in response to dissatisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service provided by Lambeth and a general feeling that the estate was being neglected.

The continuation ballot held in 2002 received a vote in favour of the TMO of 96%.

## Organisation and staffing

There are 17 committee members, including 2 lease-holders, and 5 unfilled seats on the committee. There are 13 female and 4 male members of the committee and 4 members are of black or ethnic minority origin. Seven of the members are aged over 60, 8 are in the 40-59 age-group and two in the 20-39 age-group.

The committee meets monthly (with the finance committee meeting held the week before) and there are 2 sub-committees, finance and social.

The TMO directly employs 16 staff in all, including a contract manager, finance officer, rent arrears officer, 2 plumbers, 2 general maintenance workers and a cleaner/gardener. There is no estate manager in post at the moment. The maintenance staff are based in a separate office. All work is done in-house apart from electrical work and major repairs that are contracted out. The TMO has taken over responsibility for the maintenance of lifts and boilers from the local authority this year.

The TMO is based in a purpose-built office in the middle of the estate and there is a separate maintenance office. The TMO has network and e-mail access and its own bank account.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO provides a wide range of community and social activities and has a community flat for the use of various groups.

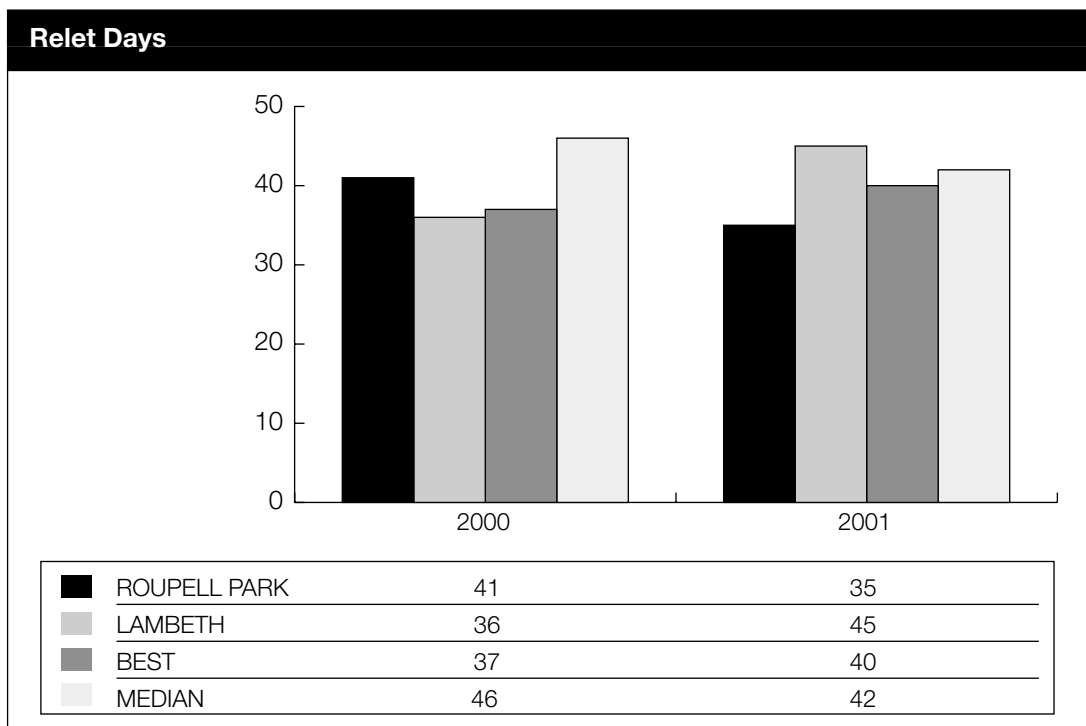
## Property

The estate is composed of twelve high-rise blocks built in the 1950s, facing in around a square. There are problems with the communal heating and hot water system, now over 40 years old, and with the wooden external window-frames. There is also a certain amount of over-crowding.

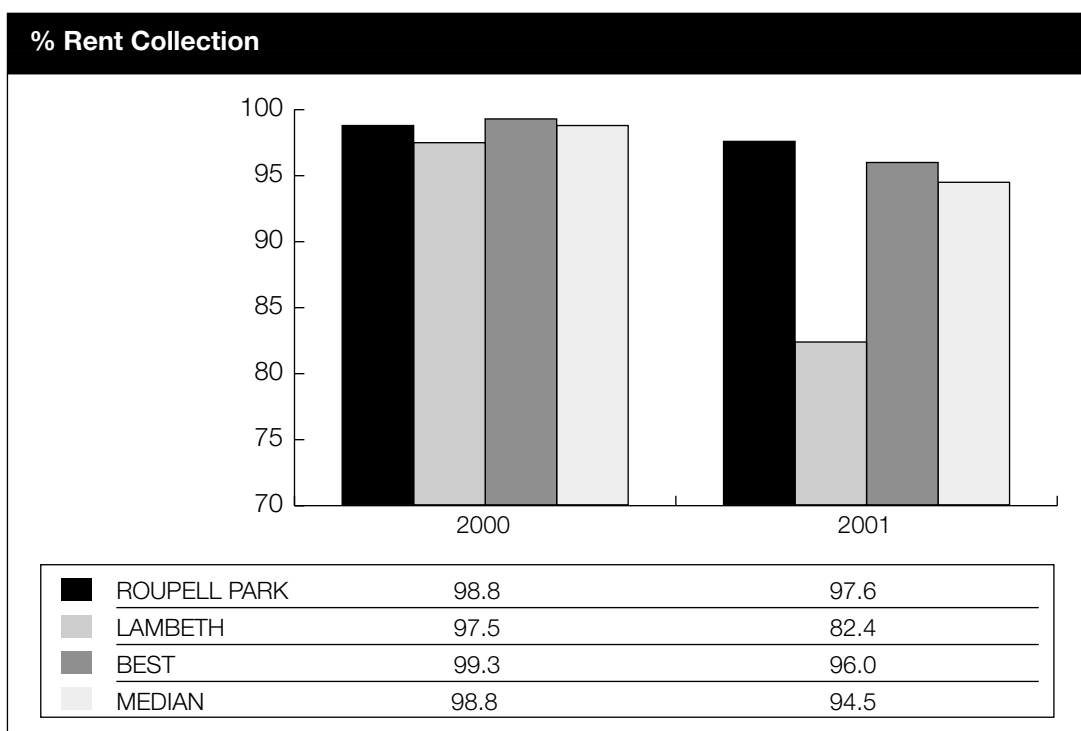
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

In 2000 the average number of days taken by the TMO was 41, which was longer than the other comparators. In 2001 this had improved to 35 days which was better than all the other comparators.



There is very little variation in percentage rent collection between the four comparators in 2000. The TMO outperformed the Local Authority and the Median. In 2001 the TMO outperformed the other comparators, being considerable better than the Local Authority.



## Tenant satisfaction

86% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 77% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 84% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 78% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 88% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 88% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

Lambeth has 15 established TMOs and 4 in development. Five specialist staff are employed to support TMOs. The council provides computers and, at a charge, assists with IT, payroll administration, and recruitment. TMOs can also use the council’s personnel and legal services. Specialist training is provided for TMOs when a need is identified.

## Future plans

The TMO has plans to start a furniture recycling scheme. In the long-term it would like to become an Registered Social Landlord.

# St Martins Association of Residents and Tenants (SMART) Carlisle City Council

## Background

St Martins is a rural estate in Brampton, covering 192 properties of which 53 have been sold under the Right to Buy. SMART residents served a Right to Manage notice on Carlisle City Council in 1998 and the TMO is now in the development stage. The ballot held at the end of the feasibility period in August 2000 obtained an 88% vote in favour of the TMO. The training agency working with the group is Banks of the Wear.

The impetus for tenant management emerged from frustration with the local authority's perceived lack of management and neglect of the estate over a number of years. There was an already established residents association on the estate and this took on the work of becoming a TMO.

The Council is due to ballot on LSVT in June 2002. Riverside Housing Association, the proposed landlord, have already approached SMART and made a commitment to support a TMO and honour any management agreement in place at transfer.

## Organisation and Staffing

There are currently 11 committee members, including three owner occupiers and one leaseholder. There are five women and six men on the committee and one vacant seat. Five members are aged 60 or above, five between 40-59, and one between 20-39. There are no black or ethnic minority committee members at present. The committee meets monthly and there are quarterly open meetings. Working parties cover training, repairs and maintenance.

The group plans to undertake all housing management tasks, apart from capital works and rent and service charge collection, and to directly employ 3 staff in total: a housing manager, and administrative worker and a caretaker/handyperson.

## Non-housing activities

SMART has organised social events, raised funds for play equipment, a basket-ball court and a children's play area. They have also planted flower-beds and containers around the estate and have won an award for their gardens.

## Property

The estate is composed of houses, low-rise flats and maisonettes built in the 1960s. Problems have been experienced with windows, drainage, and flat roofs.

## Performance

Not applicable.

## Tenant satisfaction

Not applicable.

## Links to the Local Authority

Carlisle City Council has one other TMO. SMART has links at a number of levels with the council: the tenant participation officer liaises with, and supports, the developing TMO and in addition, the group meets monthly with the Assistant Manager of Housing Management and the Repairs Section.

The local housing office in Brampton closed in 1999 and the housing management service is now delivered from Carlisle.

The Council has set aside a sum of £8,120 pa for the support of groups working towards or achieving tenant management and gives SMART a budget out of which they rent their office and a garage for storage.

## Future plans

The committee hopes to expand their responsibilities over time to include rent and service charge collection and capital works.

# Springs Tenant Management Co-operative Bury MBC

## Background

Springs Tenant Management Co-operative is an inner city TMO in Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, established under the Right to Manage in 1996. The TMO covers 335 properties and there have been approximately 15 sales under the Right to Buy, 3 of which took place after the TMO went into management.

The TMO area was originally part of a bigger estate built in the 1930s. About 200 properties have been knocked down and 300 sold to a private developer leaving the TMC properties surrounded by new build housing association stock and a mix of tenures. Concerns about poor standards of service and the declining reputation of the area led to the setting up of the TMO. The existing tenants association had also been involved in an earlier successful campaign against the sale of the estate.

The first continuation ballot in September 2001 obtained a 92% vote in favour of the TMO.

## Organisation and Staffing

There are 15 committee members and no vacant seats. Twelve of the members are tenants and three are co-opted. Eleven are women, four are aged 60+, seven from 40-59 and four from 20-39. There is one ethnic minority member. The committee meets monthly and there are two sub-committees: finance and employment.

The TMO directly employs five members of staff: the director, financial services officer, management services officer, a caretaker/handyperson and a community development worker.

Members of the committee have regular and close contact with staff, calling in three or four times a week. The TMO has its own bank account and, since November 2001, e-mail access.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO has an active community development strategy and works in partnership with a number of other agencies and funding bodies, including the SRB, to provide an extensive range of community activities. It is also the lead organisation for the New Springs Community Project Group.

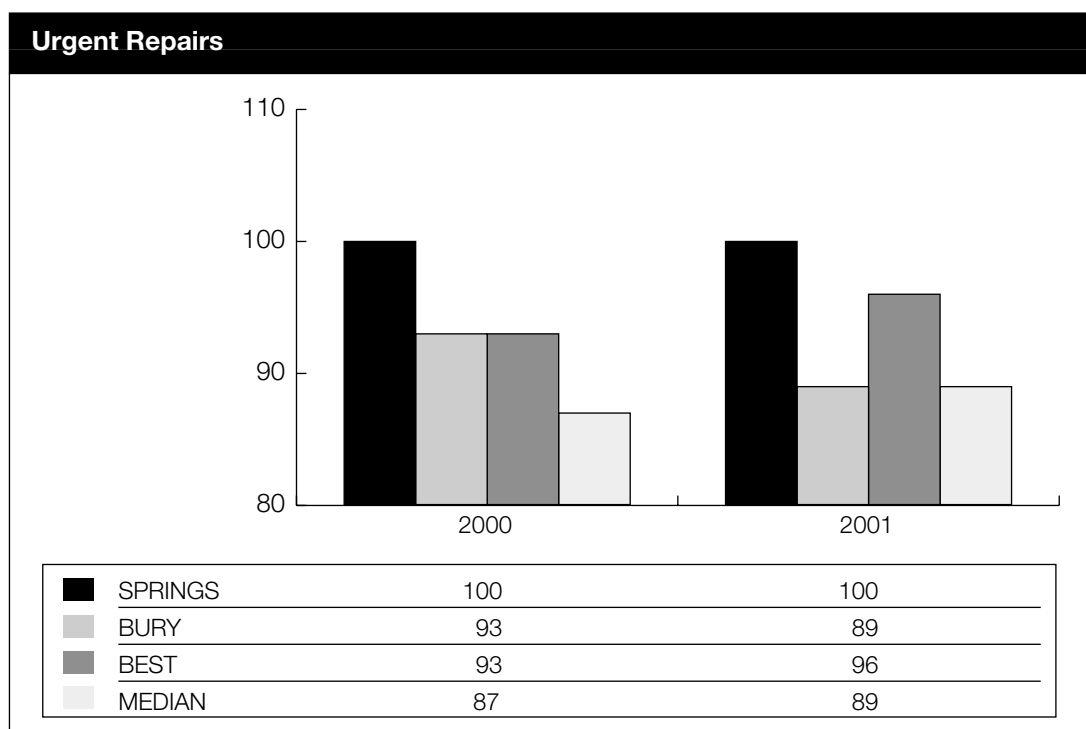
## Property

The estate is composed mainly of pre-war one, two and three bed-roomed flats. There are considerable structural damp problems involving failed damp-proof courses, poor under-floor ventilation, severe condensation and standing water under floors. There are also problems with the roofs of the pre-war flats that require regular maintenance.

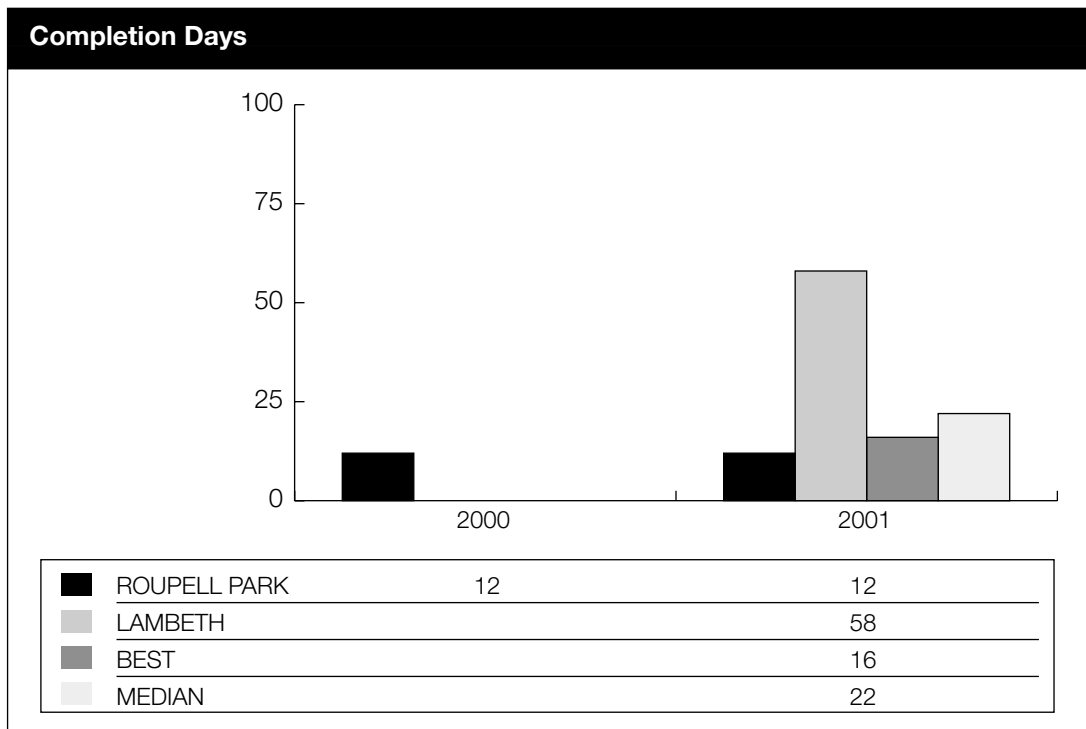
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✓

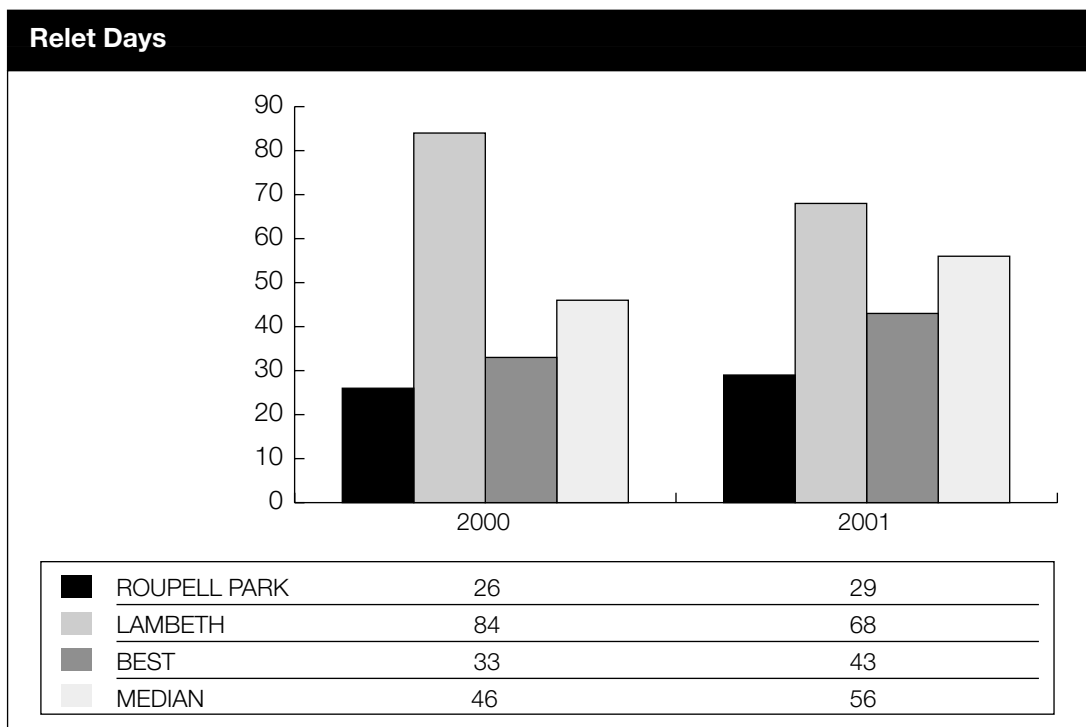
All urgent repairs are completed by the TMO within government timescales. This compares with 93% in 2000 and 89% in 2001 for the Local Authority. The TMO also outperforms the Top Quartile and the Median.



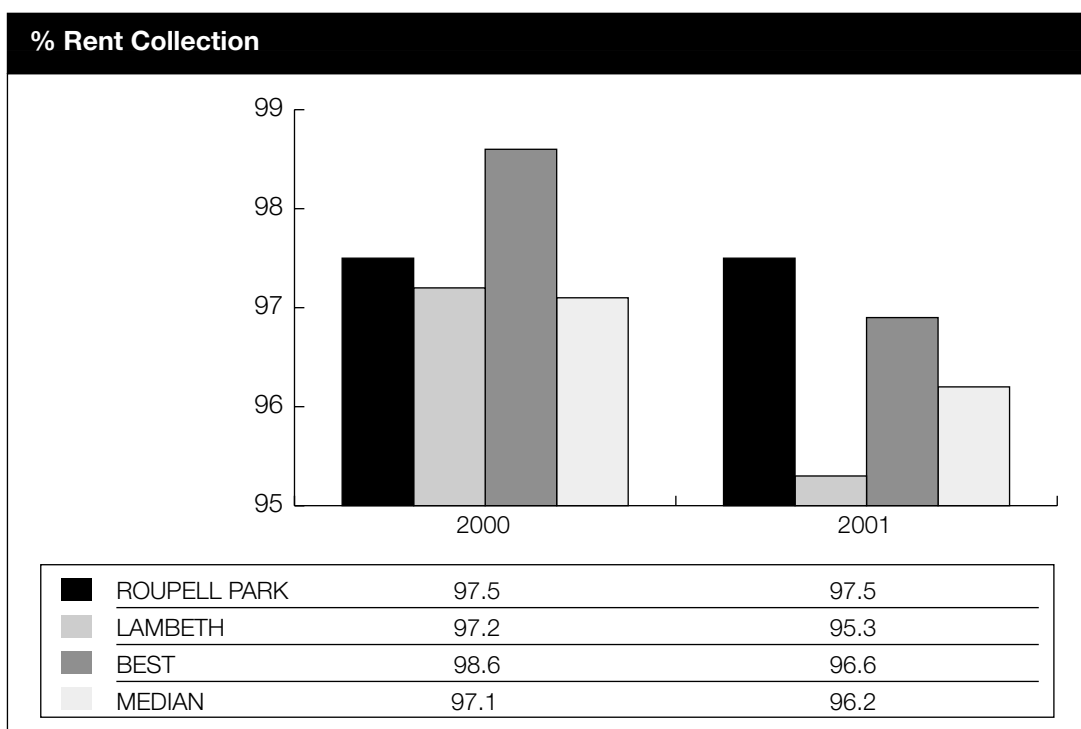
Data in respect of the number of days to complete non urgent repairs is not available for 2000 for the local authorities. In 2001, the TMO's average completion time was 12 days compared with the top quartile performance of 16 days.



The average relet days for the TMO are 26 in 2000 and 29 in 2001. This is much better than the local authority and reflects the effects of the allocations policy used by Springs.



The rent collection figures show very little variation between the four comparators. In 2000 the TMO was better than the median and the local authority. In 2001 the TMO was better than the top quartile performance of local authorities.



## Tenant satisfaction

71% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 60% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 40% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 60% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 44% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 55% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

A survey conducted by the TMO in 2000 showed high levels of satisfaction with the TMO. The TMO reported very few complaints.

## Links to the Local Authority

Springs is the only TMO in Bury and there are none in development. Another TMO in development failed its final ballot in 1999. An officer from the council's tenant participation unit is responsible for liaison with Springs. The TMO has access to central services and also to any general tenant training courses being run by the council.

## Future Plans

The TMO is considering replacing flats with more family properties to attract a broader mix of residents.

# The Avenues Tenant Management Organisation Walsall MBC

## Background

The Avenues Tenant Management Organisation is an outer city TMO established in August 1999 under the Right to Manage in Walsall MBC. The TMO is located in Brownhills on the northern edge of the borough. The TMO covers 211 houses of which 56 have been bought under the Right to Buy.

The TMO emerged from an already existing residents association in response to concerns about the poor housing management and repairs service, the declining physical appearance of the estate and the level of crime. Houses were becoming hard to let and residents felt the estate was being neglected and increasingly stigmatised.

There was a 67% vote in favour of the TMO with a 97% turn-out.

## Organisation and staffing

There are 15 board members and no vacant seats. Nine of the board members are women. There are no black or ethnic minority members on the board reflecting historic allocation patterns on the estate. Four members are owner occupiers and the constitution stipulates that the TMO must have a tenant majority. The board meets monthly.

The TMO employs an estate manager, a part-time cleaner and a newly created post of handyperson, based in a local office on the estate. There is also a full-time environment manager and part-time worker as part of an environmental services project which the TMO is hoping to develop.

The chair visits the estate office daily and usually stays there until 1pm. Board members cover the phones when the estate manager is on leave or ill. The TMO does not have internet access but can use the council's internal e-mail system and has its own bank account.

The TMO has just taken over responsibility for grounds maintenance.

## Non-housing activities

The TMO is engaged in a variety of social, community and environmental activities including: organising the collection of unwanted household furniture in good condition for Social Service. There is some overlap with the Community Association which has organised holidays and outings for children; fundraised for a play area and ball park; and runs a mother and toddlers group. Some board members are involved in a credit union which runs a weekly session in the TMO office.

The TMO has also worked in partnership with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and Co-operation Black Country to establish an Environmental Project to employ long-term unemployed young people as a stepping stone to permanent local employment. The board were also negotiating for Landfill Tax Funds to develop the Environmental Project further.

## Property

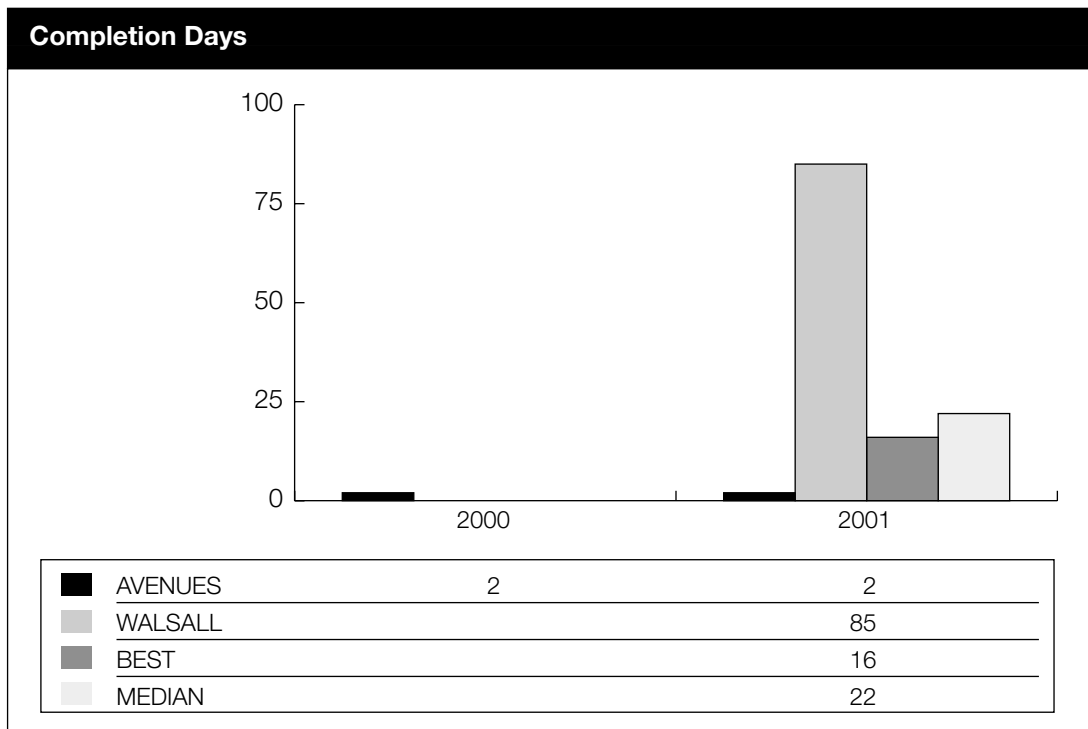
The estate was built in the 1920s mainly for people working in nearby coalfields. The houses were re-roofed in the 1950s and a modernisation programme conducted in the 1970s. Since then, no major work has been done apart from a painting programme. The houses have problems with damp and a number need new kitchens and central heating systems.

Front fencing and gates have been replaced, alleyways and gardens improved since the setting up of the TMO.

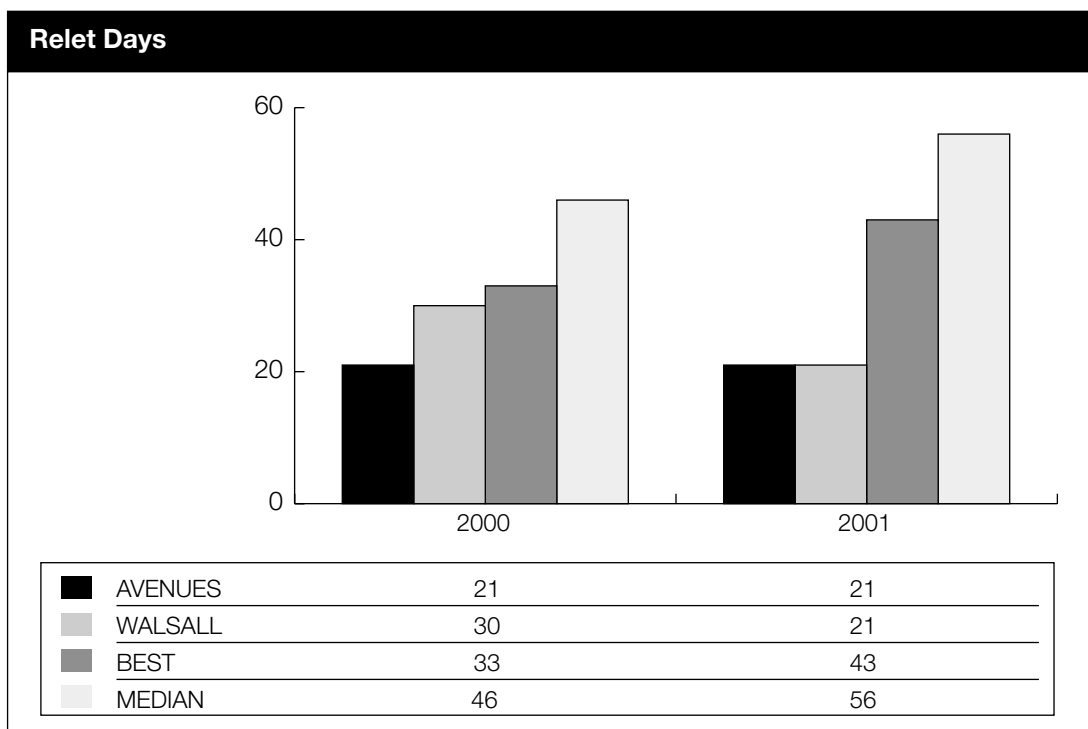
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
✓	✓	✗

Urgent repairs are carried out by the Local Authority, not by the TMO. Non urgent repairs are the responsibility of the TMO and are completed within 2 days, which far exceeds the performance of the Local Authority and the Best and Median performance in 2001. This has been recognised as one of the key achievements of the TMO. Comparative local authority data for 2000 is not available.



The average relet times is 21 days. The TMO does not keep detailed records of the relet times. This figure has been estimated by the TMO and may include some days when the properties are not available for letting, due to repairs being carried out on the properties. When the TMO was set up there were a number of void properties on the estate, the TMO now has a waiting list, and in their view their future performance is likely to improve.



Board members felt that they were providing an excellent service: “We’ve done more in 2 years than the council in 30 years.”

## Tenant satisfaction

69% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 84% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 42% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 45% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 63% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 70% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

Having started operating with eight voids, the TMO now has a waiting list (in an authority where demand for council housing is falling overall).

## Links with local authority

The Council has actively encouraged the formation of TMOs. The local authority provides training to TMO members and there is a dedicated member of the Customer Involvement team of six who liaises with the TMO and attends AGMs. The council is trying to improve TMO monitoring and has introduced a standard monitoring form for all TMOs. The estate manager is an ex-council employee of many years standing with good contacts in the local authority.

## Future plans

The TMO is looking at taking on external decorations and rubbish collection for tenants and owner occupiers on the estate and elsewhere locally.

The TMO is a member of WATMOS – an organisation representing all the Walsall TMOs intending to take on the ownership of Walsall's TMO stock.

# Turf Hill Estate Management Board Rochdale MBC

## Background

Turf Hill Estate Management Board is on an outer city estate about a mile and a half from Rochdale city centre. The TMO was established in 1997 under the Right to Manage and covers 372 tenanted properties and a further 50 sold under the Right to Buy.

A number of factors played a role in the setting up of the TMO. The estate suffered from serious problems of crime, disorder and poor repairs and the tenants association wished to halt this process of decline. The local authority and an independent consultant set up an Options Appraisal Study and, after visits to other projects around the country, tenants chose to set up a TMO. Concern about the possible transfer of the estate from LA ownership also played a role in bringing tenants together. The bid to establish the TMO went in at the same time as the bid for Estate Action and the EMB was able to oversee a £7.9 million programme of refurbishment. To reflect the changes in the area, the name was later changed, from Turf Hill Estate to Turf Hill Village.

## Organisation and Staffing

There are currently 11 board members, all of whom are tenants, and one vacant seat. Ten of the board members are women, all are tenants and one is aged over 60. There are no black or ethnic minority board members at present, but attempts have been made to involve the growing proportion of Asian residents on the estate. The board meets bi-monthly and there are no sub-committees.

The TMO has the services of officers seconded from the local authority: a full-time senior housing officer and a third each of an assistant housing manager, a rehousing officer, and an admin. officer. The full-time officer is based in the local housing office and visits the TMO about three times a week.

The TMO has e-mail and internet access.

In 2000 the TMO decided to hand back control of repairs and grounds maintenance to the local authority. As a result their finances have greatly improved and they now focus on voids inspection, control of decorating allowances and security budgets.

## Non-housing activities

A wide range of community activities and social activities, including various training initiatives, are run from the Turf Hill Initiatives Centre of which the EMB is an integral part.

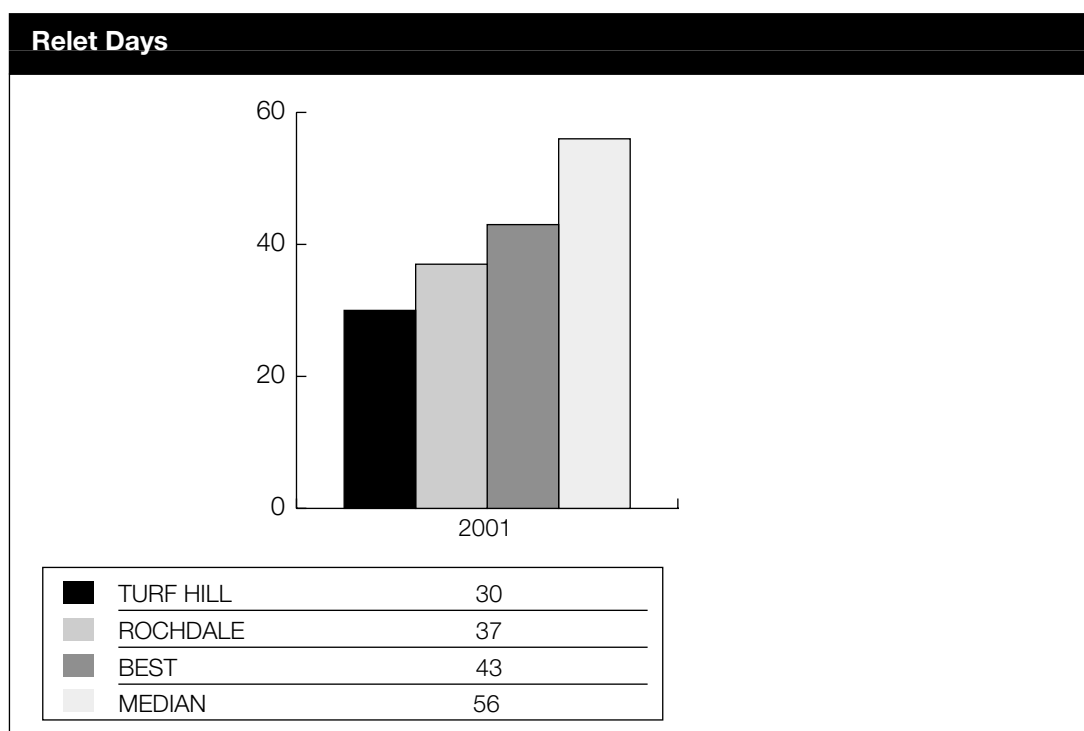
## Property

The estate is composed of red-brick cottage style 1920 dwellings, approximately two-thirds houses and one-third flats. The recent Estate Action refurbishment has ensured that the properties are in good condition and provided the estate with 27 different property types.

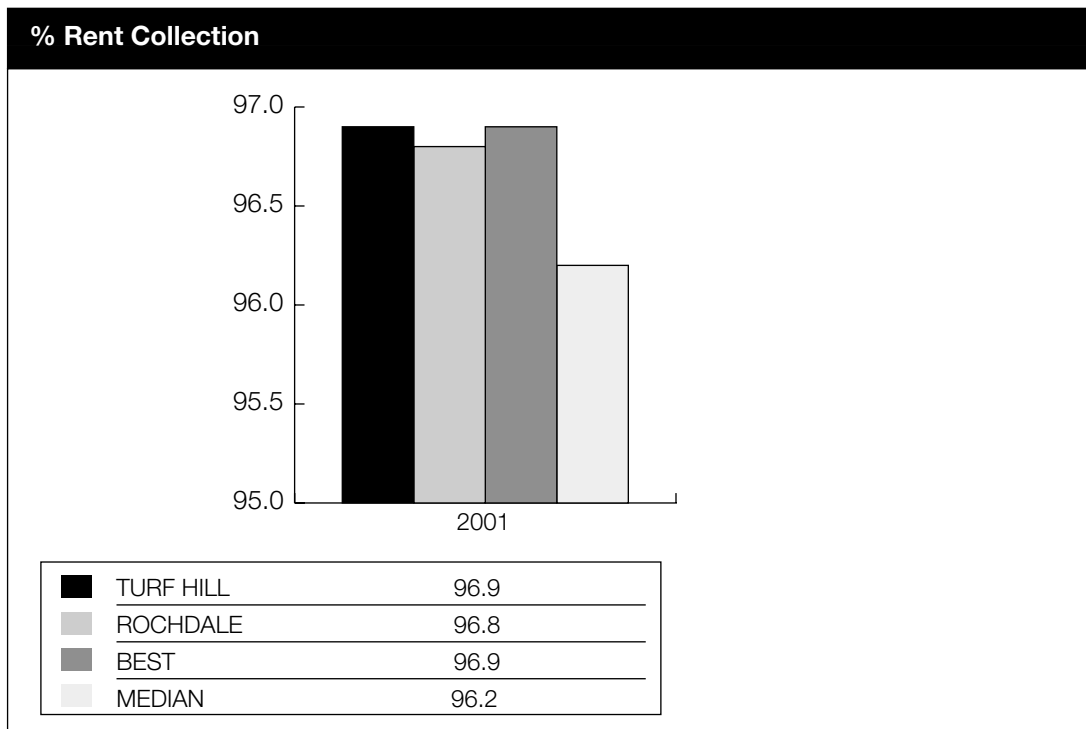
## Performance

Activities for which the TMO is responsible		
Repairs	Lettings	Rent Collection
x	x	x

The average number of days taken to relet properties in Turf Hill in 2001 was 30. This was considerably better than the other comparators. The TMO is not responsible for lettings, this function remains with the Local Authority.



The percentage rent collection for the Turf Hill properties in 2001 was 96.9%. This compares favourably with the performance of the other comparators. The TMO is not responsible for lettings, this function remains with the Local Authority.



The TMO was established in response partly to problems of crime and disorder and, according to board members, the estate now has the lowest crime rate in Rochdale.

## Tenant satisfaction

57% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the TMO taking everything into account. 60% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the TMO dealt with repairs and maintenance. 30% thought that since the TMO had been set up, the quality of repairs had got better; 32% thought that the speed of repairs had got better; 13% thought that the quality of grounds maintenance had got better and 17% thought that the quality of estate cleaning had got better.

## Links to the Local Authority

There are two other established TMOs in the authority. Rochdale has decentralised housing management and Turf Hill is managed from the Rochdale South Area Housing Office. Training is provided for TMOs both on specific issues and as part of a tenant training programme. Legal, financial, employment, personnel, community development and IT training can also be made available.

## Future plans

The TMO may employ an estate caretaker at some point in the future.

# APPENDIX IV

## Stakeholder interviewees

The following people were interviewed as part of the initial scoping stage of the research:

### **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Charles Woodd, Active Communities Unit  
Roger Jarman, Audit Commission  
Carole Amer & Adrian Moran, Housing Corporation

### **HOUSING & LOCAL AUTHORITY ORGANISATIONS**

Ashraf Ahmed, Chartered Institute of Housing  
Fola Ogunjobi, National Housing Federation  
Harris Beider, Federation of Black Housing Organisations  
Duncan Bowie, Association of London Government

### **SECTION 16 AGENCIES**

Ruth Miller & Carl Taylor, Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services  
Louis Blair, First Call  
Tricia Zipfel, Priority Estates Project  
Steve Osborne & John Farr, Safe Neighbourhoods Unit  
Carole Squires, Source Partnership  
Hugh Maloney, PPCR  
Phil Morgan, Tenant Participation Advisory Service

### **TENANT ORGANISATIONS**

Dilys Fletcher, Association of Tenants in Control  
Cath Quine, National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations  
Cora Carter, Tenants and Residents Organisation England (TAROE)  
Nic Bliss, Confederation of Co-operative Housing  
Lindsay Nixon, National Tenants Resource Centre

### **OTHER CONTRIBUTORS**

Sue Plain & Jon Carty, Southwark Tenant Initiatives Team

# APPENDIX V

## Note on resident survey method

This note provides a detailed description of the survey methodology used in the survey of resident satisfaction in Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs).

### Background and context

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (then the DTLR) commissioned this survey with the aim of evaluating the levels of satisfaction amongst residents in TMOs across the country.

Oxford Brookes University School of Planning, the main contractors for the survey, commissioned Market Research UK, an independent market research organisation, to conduct the survey fieldwork on their behalf.

### Survey method

The ODPM agreed with Oxford Brookes to select a total of 16 TMOs across the country for inclusion in this survey, on the basis that these TMOs represented a cross section of the different sizes and types of such organisations.

The survey method agreed for this study was face to face interviews of residents at home, using a standard questionnaire for both tenants and leaseholders. A total of 480 face to face interviews was agreed for the survey across all TMOs.

### Sample design

The first stage of sample design involved the stratification of the resident population by tenure, as supplied to the researchers by the TMOs, to produce an achieved number of 380 interviews with tenants and 100 interviews with leaseholders.

This approach was selected in order to achieve a minimum overall sampling error for tenants of  $\pm 5\%$  at the 95% confidence level; for leaseholders, a minimum of 100 interviews would ensure that a broad picture of leaseholder satisfaction could be achieved, given the budget constraints for the survey as a whole.

The second stage of sample design involved stratifying the sample to achieve interviews with at least 20 tenants and 5 leaseholders within each TMO. This disproportionate sample

design was selected in order to ensure a minimum number of interviews within each TMO – some have fewer than 50 residents in total, some have over 1200 residents. A proportional sample might have produced only a handful of interviews in the smaller TMOs.

The third stage of sample design involved assigning the extra interviews on a proportional basis, relative to the population of the tenure groups within each TMO. For example, once the second stage sample design had been activated and 320 tenant interviews had been assigned (20 to each of the 16 TMOs), the remaining 60 interviews were allocated on the basis of the numbers of tenants within each TMO.

In the case of Belle Isle EMB, for example, which accounted for 1270 tenants (21%) of the total of 6067 in all 16 TMOs, an extra 13 interviews were assigned, that is, 21% of the 60 spare interviews.

This sample design procedure was followed for all TMOs in assigning both the tenant and leaseholder samples.

Table A1 shows the tenant and leaseholder populations within each TMO in the study, and the numbers of achieved interviews for each tenure group. The final column in the Table shows the percentage of interviews achieved as a proportion of the total population within each TMO – for example, a total of 28 interviews were achieved amongst the 229 residents of the Five Ways Tenant Management Co-operative, representing 12% of the resident population in that TMO.

Table A1 shows that a total of 386 tenant interviews and 94 leaseholder interviews were achieved across the 16 TMOs, a total of 480 interviews. The target for tenant interviews was 380, and 100 for leaseholders. The achieved interviews match the targets quite closely, the main reason for the differential being that the leaseholder targets in some of the smaller TMOs could not be met fully.

Table A1: Population and Achieved Interviews by Tenure and Organisation							
Organisation	Tenants		L/holders		All residents		% of total
	Nos.	Ints	Nos.	Ints	Nos.	Ints	
Alpha	152	21	0	0	152	21	14%
Applegarth House Coop	38	25	6	0	44	25	57%
Belle Isle EMB	1270	42	290	2	1560	44	3%
Carlton Vale RMO	65	14	73	14	138	28	20%
Cottingham Close TMO	201	18	46	10	247	28	11%
Delves East	108	23	8	3	116	26	22%
Digmoor EMB	847	29	378	13	1225	42	3%
Dixon Clark Court TMO	50	18	10	7	60	25	42%
Five Ways TMC	198	22	31	6	229	28	12%
Glebe Gardens TMO	86	21	52	6	138	27	20%
Grosvenor & Regency EMO	620	33	254	3	874	36	4%
Heath Town EMB	1180	36	13	1	1193	37	3%
RouPELL Park RMC	460	18	36	14	496	32	6%
Springs TMC	326	23	0	0	326	23	7%
The Avenues TMO	144	21	65	6	209	27	13%
Turf Hill EMB	322	22	50	9	439	31	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6067</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>1312</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>7379</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>7%</b>

## Response Rates

A total of 750 pre-selected sample addresses were issued to interviewers (600 tenant addresses and 150 leaseholder addresses). For the tenant survey, interviewers visited 525 addresses to achieve 386 interviews (a response rate of 74%). For the leaseholder survey, interviewers visited all 150 addresses to achieve 94 interviews (a response rate of 63%).

## Fieldwork Procedures

The face to face interviews were conducted by teams of trained social research interviewers, based locally to each TMO and drawn from Market Research UK's national field force.

All members of the interviewing teams had been trained to IQCS standards (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme), the highest level of quality control in the market research industry. Market Research UK has been formally accredited as meeting IQCS standards by the Market Research Society.

In accordance with IQCS requirements, a strict quality control regime operated throughout the fieldwork period. This included:

- comprehensive briefing sessions for interviewers at the start of the fieldwork;
- the appointment of locally-based supervisors to monitor progress and deal with day-to-day field problems in each location;
- the accompaniment of each interviewer by a supervisor on at least one occasion;
- 100% re-editing of completed questionnaires;
- the independent back-checking of a random 10% of each interviewer's quota of completed interviews;
- all interviewers carrying an ID card of the Market Research Society, including a photograph of the interviewer.

Among a range of measures to maximise the response to the survey, interviewers called at addresses at different times of the day and evening, and during the week and at weekends, with up to three calls to each address sampled

## Data Processing and Analysis

All completed interview schedules were then passed to Market Research UK's in-house computing department, which was responsible for the following:

- data editing and coding of completed forms;
- double punching the coded data onto computer;
- validating the data set;
- preparing a fully formatted data file using SPSS.

Note: There are some slight discrepancies between the total population figures shown here and those in the case study profiles, as some TMOs revised their figures after the survey had been conducted.

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Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) are tenant-controlled organisations which provide a range of management and maintenance services to tenants under a Modular Management Agreement with their landlord. This research evaluates TMOs in terms of their own objectives and their success in delivering effective and efficient housing management services.

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