

Better and Stronger Together



Since we announced our plans to come together in a merger and create a new partnership, we have been listening to you, our customers.

We have heard what you have told us and will act on what you have said. We are pleased that so many customers chose to take the time to tell us what they thought of our proposals for a new partnership in our recent consultation. The results were clear: in total 49% of the 3,632 customers who responded were in favour of the proposals with 12% against, with other responses being neutral. For One Housing customers who responded, 40% backed the proposal with 23% against. For Riverside customers responding, 51% were in support, with 9% against. Of those expressing an opinion either way, four times as many were in favour as were against. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Today, we are happy to confirm the Boards of both Riverside and One Housing have met and carefully considered the consultation results, alongside other feedback from customers. We concluded the

partnership can proceed and we are planning that One Housing will join The Riverside Group on 1st December 2021. Together we will be able to do more for our communities and for everyone using our services, driving forward with plans for improving and repairing our homes, building more affordable housing and giving customers a louder voice in decision making.

We now have the exciting challenge of delivering the vision and priorities described in our partnership proposal. Working with our customers, local stakeholders and public authorities, we are excited by what will come next. You can find out more on the next steps we will take here:

-  Riverside Group customers
www.riverside.org.uk/together
-  One Housing customers
www.onehousing.co.uk/together



Terrie Alafat

Terrie Alafat CBE
Chair, The Riverside Group



Caroline Corby

Caroline Corby
Chair, One Housing

Consultation

In September and October, we undertook a formal consultation on the proposed partnership with the aim of listening to the views of all Riverside and One Housing customers.

The consultation was open for six weeks. It was independently administered by BMG, a leading independent provider of market research and consultation services. The consultation process was shaped by the residents who made up our Joint Customer Advisory Panel (JCAP), who were supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor, TPAS, to ensure that the consultation process was fair, transparent and inclusive.

We wrote to or emailed all our residential customers and reached out to **everyone** using our services, including hosting over **22** face-to-face sessions for general needs customers and **42** for those using Care and Support services. In total we had **3,632** survey responses, with both Riverside and One Housing customers having a **5%** response rate.

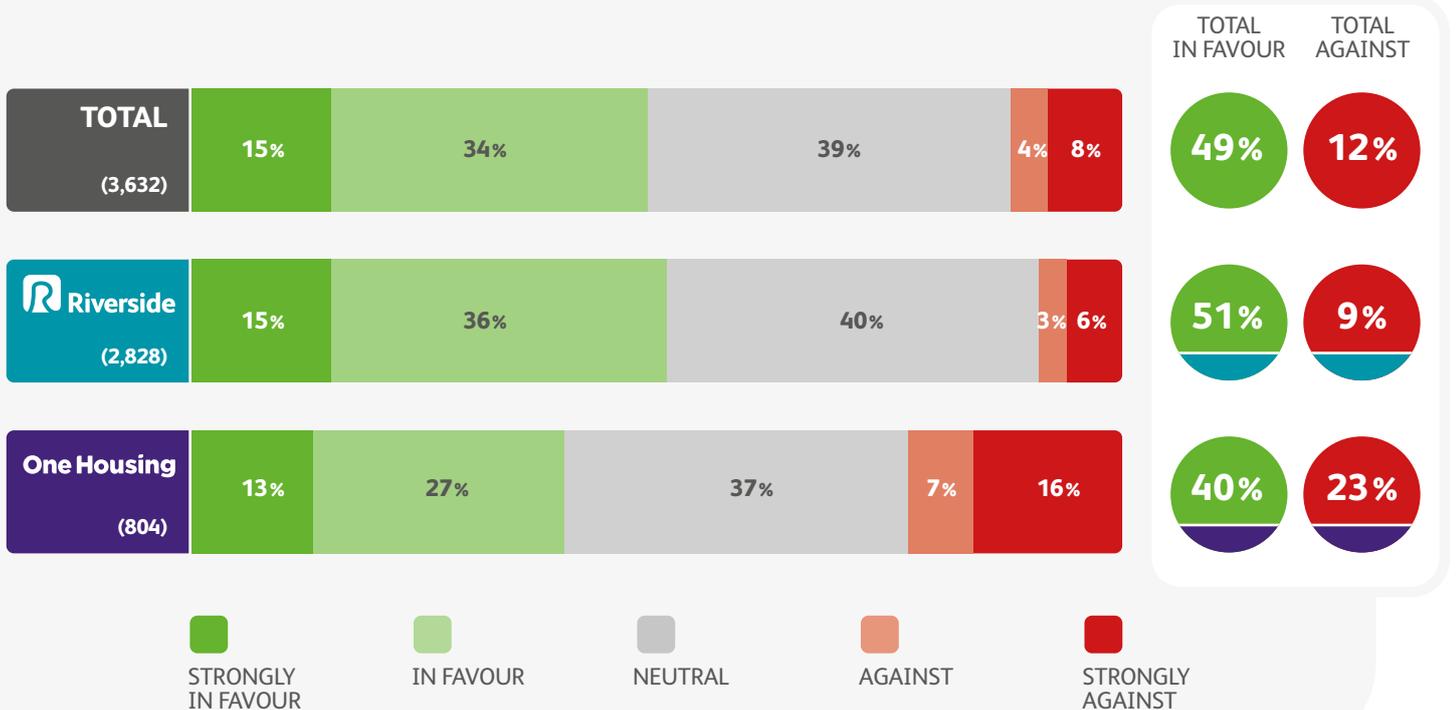
“From our viewpoint the consultation process was very robust in terms of its coverage, face to face access in areas most likely to be affected and the involvement of customer representatives in its design, monitoring and evaluation. For us continued customer consultation and involvement in decision making is key to the success of this merger.”



“In all JCAP feels the consultation has been a success and has done what it set out to do, that being to inform residents of the proposal and provide residents with quality opportunities to engage should they so wish. The real test will be whether or not we use what we are being told to make the merged association a better, more effective landlord.”

JCAP JOINT CUSTOMER ADVISORY PANEL

Overall views on One Housing becoming part of Riverside



Key feedback themes

Why customers are **IN FAVOUR** or **AGAINST** One Housing becoming part of the Riverside Group – top three comment themes:



% of comments based on the
49%
of customers
IN FAVOUR



% of comments based on the
12%
of customers
AGAINST

30%

Good for customers

45%

Don't believe it will offer any significant benefit

27%

Get things done quicker / improved services

14%

Services have already deteriorated

25%

General 'good', 'like' or 'in favour' comments

12%

Why change something that isn't broken

As part of the consultation we asked customers why they were for or against our proposals. We are listening to all the feedback provided. Here is some of what you told us...



I'm looking forward to improved customer service.

(One Housing Group, East Forum)



Looking through the brochure there are many benefits of One Housing becoming part of the Riverside Group.

(Riverside, Social Housing customer)



Because the merger would be very good for the clients as well as One Housing and Riverside Group.

(One Housing, Group Support Forum)



I think the partnership is a good idea. I like the fact of energy efficiency and more regeneration and to improve customer services.

(Riverside, Home Ownership customer)



Any company that takes over another one has never been any good for the consumer. It usually ends up cost cutting, job losses, etc.

(Riverside, Care and Support customer)



I do not agree with the partnership and feel it would not benefit people living in properties managed by one housing at all.

(One Housing Group, Island Forum)



It will probably lead to more bureaucracy and more financial gains down South at the expense of Northern areas.

(Riverside, Social Housing customer)



When housing associations get too big the maintenance of the building becomes a big problem.

(One Housing Group, North Forum customer)

Next steps...

The consultation response has shown that many customers who responded to the survey have backed our vision for a partnership which will deliver the six key pledges through a stronger organisation. The six pledges will be adopted as the guiding priorities for the partnership and we will regularly report on our progress in achieving the goals.

All the comments and feedback offered as part of the consultation has been anonymously recorded, and will guide our improvement work in the years ahead. We will work with customers to make these changes a reality.

We plan for One Housing to join the Riverside Group in December. Customers will not notice any major changes – rents, service charges and our regeneration commitments will be completely unaffected by the partnership and any future rent increases will be in line with Government guidelines. Local services will still be delivered by the same teams. As integration continues, we will continue to work with customers in laying out how services will improve and how additional money will be spent.

Our Pledges

As a reminder, the pledges we have made to customers are:



- 1** We will deliver better services for customers, protecting rents and tenancy rights.
- 2** We will make sure there is a louder customer voice, with residents able to take part in our Boards and committees, and better able to hold us to account.
- 3** We will invest nearly **£1 billion in improving and repairing homes** over the next 5 years, with a focus on fire and building safety, warmer homes and regeneration. We will also build more new affordable homes.
- 4** We will improve care and support services for older people, those with complex needs and people who are homeless.
- 5** We will improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities, providing better opportunities by investing in employment support and money advice.
- 6** We will keep our promises and make sure you can hold us to account, publishing a report each year on how we are delivering these pledges.

Find out more...

Find out more information on our plans by visiting:



Alternatively, you can contact us if you have a question:



Riverside Group customers

www.riverside.org.uk/together

email together@riverside.org.uk
or call **0345 111 0000**

One Housing customers

www.onehousing.co.uk/together

email together@onehousing.co.uk
or call **0300 123 9966**

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