



stakeholder survey summary



Our vision is to provide quality housing and excellent customer service that people want and can afford.

We will use our skills, expertise and resources to be a key partner in helping to create and maintain successful, safe and thriving communities.

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Welcome to our most recent stakeholder survey report.

This latest study has been our most comprehensive to date and represents the toughest test of external opinion that **bpha** has faced.

The type of survey used has been designed for organisations that genuinely want to test themselves against the best. Participants were therefore asked not only to rate our performance across a range of attributes but also to rank the strongest competitor they knew in the sector against each individual characteristic.

As the independent consultants who carried out the study acknowledged, this is a stern test because the overall comparison was not with one single competitor, but with an ideal virtual organisation that does not exist.

Our last survey in 2002 was very positive and we have worked hard since then to ensure that we continue to take account of stakeholder views and genuinely address the issues that matter most to them.

It is clear from the results of the latest survey that this work has paid dividends and **bpha** has much to be proud of. We have improved our performance significantly - and therefore our stakeholders' positive perceptions - in a number of critical areas and, in many cases, strengthened and deepened relationships.

It is particularly striking that this has been achieved despite a high degree of change in our own operating environment and the implementation of a number of major initiatives that have had a significant impact on our stakeholders. These results therefore underline the continuing importance of good communications and doing what we say we will do.

The survey also helpfully indicates those areas where we need to continue to pay close attention, not least because our stakeholders' worlds are changing as rapidly as our own sector and we need to help them to respond to these challenges where we can.

We are extremely grateful to all of those who took part in the survey for their honest, thoughtful and considered responses, and for generously giving of their time and ideas. Their views are now being used to help shape our future direction in a range of ways, not least with our revised corporate strategy which will be launched early in 2007.

I hope you find the report useful and interesting.

John Cross
Chief Executive

About the survey



This report outlines the main results from the third stakeholder survey carried out by **bpha** since 1996.

In all three cases, **bpha** commissioned Dome Consultants, an independent specialist company, to undertake the studies to ensure a consistent approach and to help identify trends over the longer term.

For 2006, however, a much larger sample of interviews was carried out to reflect the fact that **bpha** now works with a much broader range of stakeholders across a wider geographical area.

Using tried and tested methods, Dome Consultants gleaned the information on which this report is based through 42 interviews with senior representatives drawn from the following stakeholder audiences:

- ▶ Local authorities
- ▶ Key worker employers
- ▶ Members of the Key Communities partnership
- ▶ Strategic partnership bodies
- ▶ Regulators, funders and legal advisors
- ▶ The development industry

While a number of those interviewed were very familiar with **bpha** and our staff, a number of other stakeholders had had much more limited contact with us. In the latter case, this included stakeholders who knew **bpha** through a specific single role, for example, as HomeBuy agent, or as one of a larger pool of potential partners.



Dome asked all stakeholders to grade **bpha** on 18 qualitative attributes they required in their dealings with housing associations and then to score an alternative ‘best in sector’. They were also asked to indicate the relative importance of each attribute and to rate our competence to provide products and services.

In making these comparisons, stakeholders were able to choose any housing association, selecting the competitor that they felt had the strongest performance against each attribute. **bpha** was therefore not being compared to a single association but to a theoretical ideal organisation.

Objectives

The survey had two objectives:

- ❑ To collect, analyse and report on key stakeholders’ perceptions of **bpha** and our range of activities
- ❑ To collate qualitative data about stakeholders’ own priorities in the short and medium terms to inform our future strategic direction and priorities

The survey itself also provided stakeholders with the time and space to comment on **bpha** in a constructive and reflective way. All participants confirmed that they had found their sessions interesting and appropriate.

Overall findings



The latest study showed that stakeholders' overall perceptions of **bpha** are exceptionally positive.

The last survey undertaken in 2002 had provided much good feedback. However, Dome Consultants commented that the 2006 survey showed a significantly improved position.

The association emerged as better regarded, generally more trusted and open, and is seen as competent to manage the wide range of activities and initiatives in which it is involved.

Evidence for this can be found in the 'snapshot' comments made by stakeholders when asked to describe **bpha** now and how they would like to describe it in three years' time.

Nineteen out of 40 (48%) said that they would like to describe **bpha** as fundamentally "the same", albeit with additional attributes. This is the highest ratio of respondents using the word "same" that Dome Consultants have encountered and compares to eight out of 21 (38%) in the 2002 study. It should, however, be noted that in the 2006 study, only two out of 13 local authorities used the word "same", underlining the need for **bpha** to continue to engage closely with local government partners to help meet their needs, particularly during a time of significant change for their sector.



Dome Consultants cite the consistent approach taken by **bpha's** executive and staff teams as a key factor in enabling stakeholders to relate well to those who are responsible for their area of activity. It has also led stakeholders to believe that the values which they perceive in the executive team's behaviour and approach are genuinely shared across the association.

This was seen as significant and owing a great deal to the leadership of **bpha** and the fact that relationships had had time to mature at a senior level.

Individual ratings

Since 2002, a number of attributes had increased in importance to stakeholders, the key ones being:

- ▣ Integrity
- ▣ Commitment to the stakeholder's locality
- ▣ Holistic approach
- ▣ Accountability
- ▣ Accessibility

Against these five attributes, **bpha** achieved a similar or better rating than its virtual competitors.

bpha was also rated better than or as good as the 'best in sector' on value for money, responsiveness, professionalism and managing diverse activities.

Against several attributes, ratings were slightly lower, indicating areas where **bpha** needs to address stakeholder views. More details about how we are doing this are set out on page 10.

Stakeholders' priorities



As expected from such a diverse range of stakeholders, views about those issues that mattered most to individuals varied.

However, by combining the views of all interviewees, Dome Consultants were able to identify the attributes that were most important to stakeholders overall. The table shows these in rank order of importance and how they compare with the last survey.

Attribute	Change since 2002
Integrity - bpha saying what it will do and doing what it says	Much greater importance
Strategic partnering	As important
Commitment to the stakeholder's locality	In common with other studies, significant increase in emphasis
Holistic approach	Increased importance
Accountability - to the stakeholder, with no surprises along the way	Increased importance
Innovation and specialisms	Little change in importance
Value for money - balancing cost, efficiency and quality	Little change in importance



Attribute	Change since 2002
Servicing the relationship with the stakeholder	Not included in previous surveys - no direct comparison possible
Accessibility	Increased importance
Responsiveness	Little change in importance
Financial strength	Decreased importance
Managing external relationships	Not included in previous surveys - no direct comparison possible
Professional	As above
Community involvement	Growing emphasis
Communications	Little change in importance
Managing diverse activities	Decrease in importance
User/resident involvement	High ratings by those familiar with the issues
Managing cultural diversity	As above

Our response



The overall aim of the survey was to identify how **bpha** was perceived by stakeholders and how we could better meet their needs.

The overall messages from the latest study were very positive and Dome Consultants reported no significant concerns regarding our performance. Nevertheless, stakeholders did helpfully identify a number of areas where there was room for improvement.

These arise predominantly from a combination of inter-related strategic issues:

- ▶ The need to follow through the implications of existing activities
 - ▶ The need to make strategic responses to key emerging issues
 - ▶ The need to improve communications to inform and support decisions taken
- ▶ Balancing the strategic importance of delivering national initiatives against the need to ensure that local priorities are met

None of the issues raised is new but they are complex and by necessity, some take more time to address than others. Our response is unequivocal, however. We aim to be better than the 'best in sector' across all attributes and we know that continuous effort and greater resource are required to achieve this and to meet all the expectations of our stakeholders.



Key issues

Since the survey was undertaken, we have initiated a series of internal debates to analyse the findings and agree our response. As part of this process, Dome Consultants have presented the key findings to our own staff and to the **bpha** Board.

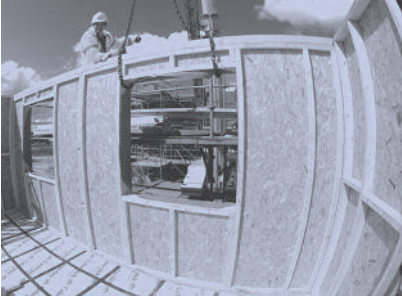
As a result of internal discussions and further consultation with stakeholders, we have agreed a series of actions. A number of these were being initiated in any case as part of our revised

corporate strategy but the survey feedback has enabled us to fine-tune them to meet stakeholders' needs even more effectively.

Broadly, the actions agreed relate to four key issues:

- ▶ Stakeholder relationships
- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Customer involvement
- ▶ Communications

Our response



This is a summary of the actions **bpha** has taken or is planning in response to the key issues raised by stakeholders.

Stakeholder relationships

- ▶ Views of stakeholders and customers have informed the development of our new corporate purpose and strategy document which is to be published shortly
- ▶ We are recruiting to the post of Executive Director (Neighbourhoods & Communities) to join our Executive Team to help direct and drive through the delivery of our ambitious plans
- ▶ Two additional senior development managers will be recruited by early spring 2007 to provide additional capacity and improve working relationships with key local authority stakeholders and development partners
- ▶ Our fourth stakeholder conference, planned for July 2007, will be influenced by the feedback from the survey and include a broader range of stakeholders

Community engagement

- ▶ Our new corporate purpose and strategy reinforces **bpha's** role at the heart of neighbourhoods and communities where we have a legitimate contribution to make; as a result, we are refocusing the way we operate and engage both with new and existing communities
- ▶ We have appointed Julia Holmes in the newly-created role of New Communities Manager to work with residents and development partners, recognising the changing needs for community engagement
- ▶ Through our leadership role in our Housing Corporation investment partnership Key Communities, we are creating an environment that shares and promotes good practice and innovation

Customer involvement

- ▶ We are currently reviewing the way we manage our customer services to meet our corporate purpose and revised corporate strategy based on independent research we have commissioned; once this is complete, we will be developing proposals with our Board and Customer Services Committee before consulting stakeholders and customers later in 2007
- ▶ We will be building on customer feedback from leaseholders and shared owners by undertaking our next satisfaction survey of residents in autumn 2007 and will continue to use the results to influence the development of future services and activities
- ▶ Customer involvement is an integral part of our operating philosophy, and we will continue to work with residents to identify how we can build on good practice
- ▶ We have undertaken a Best Value review of customer communications which will result in improved information for residents and greater resident involvement

Communications

- ▶ A revised communications strategy is being developed for **bpha** to identify key priorities and actions required; this will include specific responses to address issues raised in the stakeholder survey
- ▶ Delivery of the strategy will be supported by the recruitment of a new communications officer for **bpha** in spring 2007 and a new contract with our communications consultants, The Bridge Group
- ▶ We will be updating our corporate website and introducing more regular stakeholder newsletters informed by what you have told us
- ▶ A new communications strategy is being developed with Key Communities partners. One of the first priorities will be the launch of a new website for the partnership



For further information



If you would like further information about any aspect of this report, please contact any member of the Executive Team or Dome Consultants.

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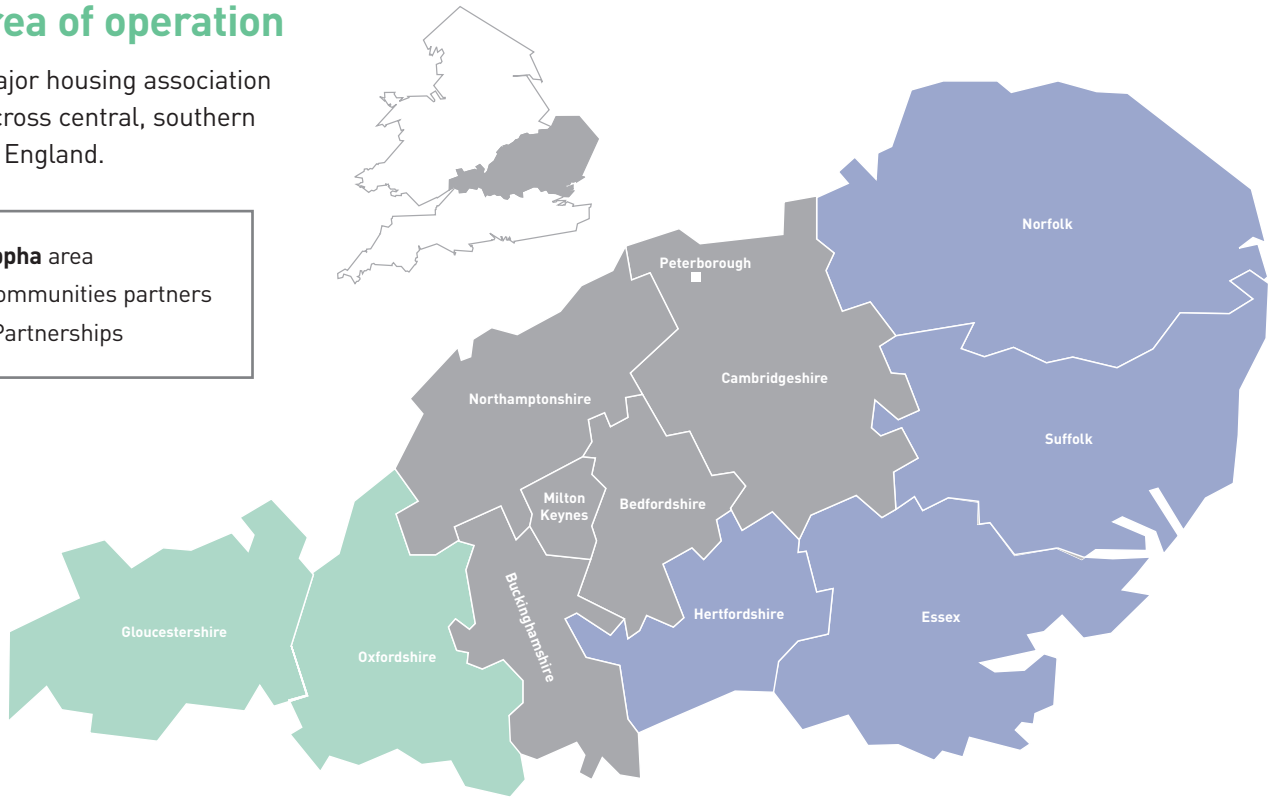
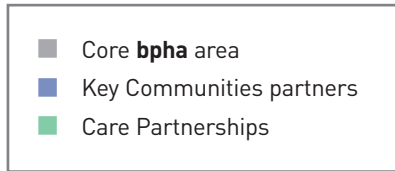
Advance notice of annual conference

Our annual conference for stakeholders will be held on Friday July 13 2007. Invitations will be sent out closer to the event but you are welcome to telephone Amanda Rowley on **01234 221201** or email her at amandaro@bpha.org.uk to reserve your free place.

www.bpha.org.uk

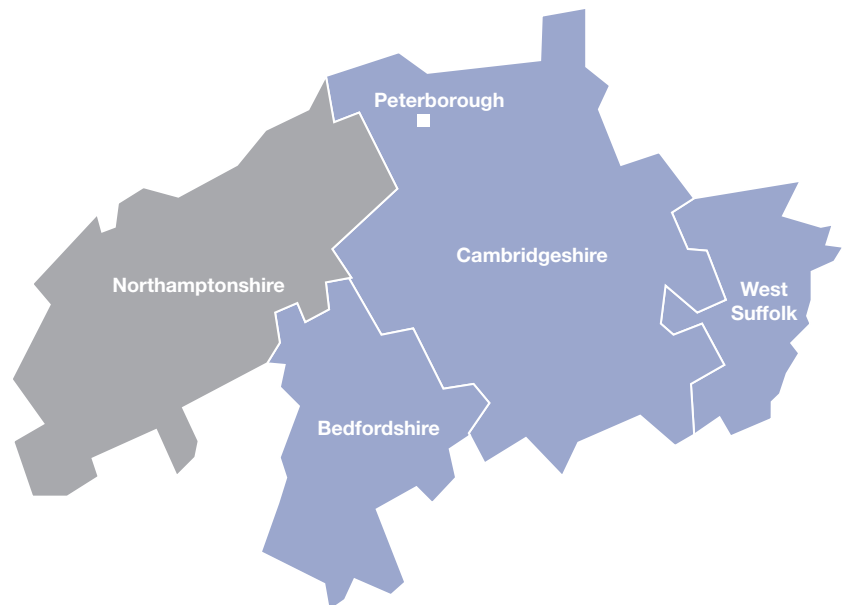
bpha area of operation

bpha is a major housing association operating across central, southern and eastern England.



HomeBuy zones

As the Government-appointed HomeBuy agent, **bpha** - through its Keyhomes East arm - provides a one-stop shop housing advice service on low cost home ownership across two zones within its core operational area.





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