

# GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

An award-winning community campaign  
The housing transfer from Tameside MBC to  
New Charter in 1999/2000

# Content

- Approaching the issue
- Developing a plan
- Do's & Don'ts
- The value of research
- Opposition
- Costs and Benefits

## The Result

- Total electorate = 19674
- Votes cast = 13514
- Turnout = 68.7%
  
- Yes = 63%
- No = 37%

# The Result

## NORTH

Yes 61.6%

No 38.4%

## SOUTH

Yes 64.4%

No 35.6%

# Background

- Applied learning from previous transfer vote (Ashton Pioneer Homes)
- Council wanted a 'Yes' vote
- Realistic budgets set
- Council's past involvement in setting up companies

# The Brief

- Secure a 'Yes' vote
- Partnership of transfer team and Staniforth, specialist PR advisor
- 'Brand' the campaign
- Factual information to tenants in a professional manner
- Run a 'referendum' style campaign

# The Approach

- Tenants are the key audience
- Keep employees informed and motivated
- Adopt a tabloid style
- Plan information programme to peak at ballot

# The Strategy

- Newsletters
- Videos
- Freephone
- Leaflets
- Pocket guides
- Promotional activity
- Face to face contact with tenants

# The Campaign

the **Big Switch**

**YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME**

**The Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

Mark's job pledge  
The Big Switch will mean:  
- Rapid and immediate repairs  
- More services will be opened to tenants  
- No cut in the rent for tenants who  
- Support improvements

**SAVE £500 -  
RENTS PLEDGE**



He wants change after 50 years  
The House of Lords has  
recommended that tenants  
should have a say in how their  
homes are run.

**The Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME



**SEE THE HOMES  
OF THE FUTURE!**

Tenants will see the homes of the future this week - if The Big Switch goes ahead.

THE SHOWCASE HITS TOWN - back page

**The Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

**WIN £100**

**What can £12,500 buy?**

- ✓ New kitchen
- ✓ New bathroom
- ✓ Double glazing
- ✓ New roof
- ✓ New front door
- ✓ Central heating

**SWITCH ON TO £12,500 FACELIFT**

ADVISE HOTLINE FREEPHONE 0800 731 5975

**10 good reasons to vote YES**

- 1 A better way.** Switching to a new independent trust will mean better repairs, improvements to every Council home and a bigger say for tenants.
- 2 Improved homes.** More than £100 million needs to be spent to modernise the Council's homes. But 2015 government rules mean the Council cannot raise the cash. The new independent trust (NIT) will be run by a partnership of tenants, housing experts and Council staff.
- 3 No change to your right to buy.** Tenants will still have the right to buy their home from the new independent trust. And they will still qualify for discounts, as now.
- 4 The Bill shopping list.** An average of £10,000 will be spent on each home. Repairs will be done and out of date bathrooms, kitchens, and heating will be replaced. Modernisation, security and environmental improvements will be agreed with tenants first.
- 5 Rent increases will be capped.** Tenants will have a fair year rent guarantee keeping rent to a maximum - no more than inflation, plus one per cent. These increases are £800 less than planned by the Council.
- 6 Bigger say for tenants.** Tenants will have a much bigger say in how their homes are run. Tenants, housing experts and Council staff will have an equal voice.
- 7 Tenants' rights protected.** Tenants' rights will be protected - including the Right to Buy, the Right to Succession and the Right to Exchange. Every tenant will get a new, legally binding agreement.
- 8 No changes to Housing Benefits.** There will be no changes.
- 9**
- 10**

**Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

Your pocket guide to  
**YES**  
The Big Switch

**YES**

**Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

WATCH THIS VIDEO TO SEE HOW YOUR HOME CAN BE IMPROVED



the **Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

Read this leaflet to find out how  
**YOUR HOME**  
could have  
**£12,500**  
worth of  
repairs and  
improvements

**Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME

INF

Read this leaflet to find out how  
you could be  
more than  
**£500**  
better off

**Big Switch**  
YOUR VOTE FOR A BETTER HOME



# The Messages

- Keep messages simple and focussed
- The Four 'R's'
  - Repairs
  - Rents
  - Representation
  - Rights

# The Plan

- High profile campaign
- Seven newsletters
- Two videos
- Huge door-knocking exercise
- Promotional activity
- Brief the local media

# The Plan

## AVOID

- Public meetings
- Debate in local media
- Responding to opposition agenda

# What We Knew

## THE BIG PUSH

- 83% of tenants visited
- 50% in favour
- Only 6% against

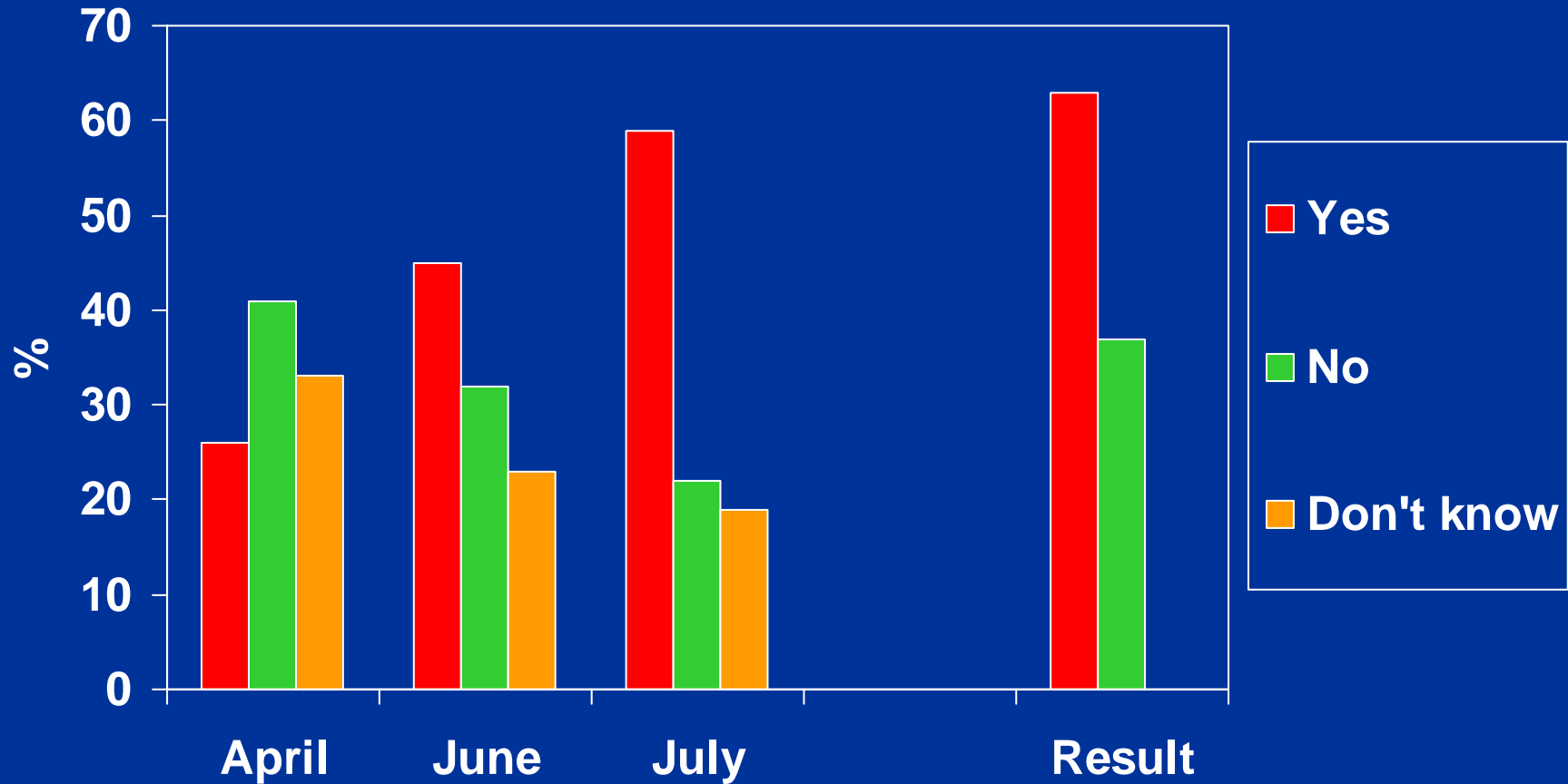
# Three Target Groups

- The elderly
- Tenants of long standing
- The under 40s

# Harris Research

- Three sets of interviews
- 1000 tenants contacted (*statistically significant sample*)
- Telephone interviews
- Low refusal rate

# Harris Research



# The Value of Research

- Not relying on ‘gut feel’
- No knee jerk reaction
- Confirmed key messages
- Guided editorial content and direction
- Indicated voting intentions

# The Ballot

- No knowledge of how tenants were voting
- But we know how many had voted
- And who hadn't voted

# Tracking the Actual Turnout

	North	South
14th September	49%	52%
21st September	58%	61%
28th September	66%	68%

# Options During Ballot

- Re-issue ballot papers?
- Write to those who hadn't voted?
- Do nothing!

# The 'No' Campaign

- Some local protest
- Some 'imported' protestors
- Letters in local papers
- Unison ads in 2nd week of vote

# Costs and Benefits

- Examples of unit costs
- Better housing
- Unlocks £0.28 billion investment over next 10 years
- Capital receipt to Council
- Improved relationship with tenants

## Awards

- Winner of National Grand Prix prize, IPR Cream awards 2000
- Winner North West Grand Prix prize, IPR Cream awards 2000
- Winner North West Best Community Campaign, IPR Cream awards 2000
- Finalist, IPR Excellence Awards 2000

# Contacts

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