

## **Item: 9**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 6 June 2018.**

**Tenant Satisfaction Survey.**

**Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To advise of findings of a tenant satisfaction survey.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

That a wholesale tenant satisfaction survey is required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the process for which is detailed and prescriptive for landlords with up to 1,500 tenants, including achieving a return rate of 40%.

#### **2.2.**

That the results of the process, referred to at paragraph 2.1 above, are used by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the process of regulating Local Authority Housing Services.

#### **2.3.**

That, during April and May 2018, a tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by an independent body, IBP Strategy and Research, on behalf of the Council, the results of which are summarised in section 4 of this report.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1.**

The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which came into effect on 1 April 2012 and was updated in 2017, includes a series of outcomes and standards against which housing services are to be regulated.

#### **3.2.**

The Charter includes a requirement that landlords undertake regular surveys of their tenants to assess their satisfaction with services and report the findings to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

### **3.3.**

The Scottish Housing Regulator, in conjunction with Ipsos MORI, has produced guidance on undertaking such surveys. The guidance is detailed and prescriptive. It requires that landlords with up to 1,500 tenants are required to survey all their tenants and that all landlords seek to achieve at least a 40% return rate, which is challenging. It also provides detail on the type of questions to be asked to ensure that the Scottish Housing Regulator can in turn receive information on certain key outcomes.

### **3.4.**

The Council undertook its initial survey in September to October 2013. In order to meet all the requirements of the guidance, the Council worked jointly with Orkney Housing Association Limited who have undertaken tenant surveys for a significant number of years. Its last tenant survey was undertaken in September 2016.

### **3.5.**

A joint arrangement was made with IBP Strategy and Research which specialises in undertaking surveys for landlords. This gave the added advantage of being able to anonymise information and allowed tenants to respond openly without the Council receiving details of individual responses.

### **3.6.**

It has been determined locally that it is more appropriate to undertake surveys every two years rather than every three years to ensure the data is reflective of the current tenant base.

### **3.7.**

The survey, which is the third one for Council tenants, was undertaken over April and May 2018.

## **4. Survey Results**

### **4.1.**

The survey focused on a range of issues, including the following:

- Social, economic and demographic profile of tenants.
- Quality of communication.
- Tenant participation.
- Contact with the Council's Housing Service.
- Complaints.
- The Home.
- Repairs and housing services.
- Rent and arrears.
- The neighbourhood.

- Final comments and overall satisfaction.

## 4.2.

Surveys were sent to all tenants within Housing Revenue Account properties, a total of 842 surveys. A total of 337 valid responses were received which amounts to the required 40% response rate. The data is determined to be accurate to +/- 4.10%. Results should help to assess compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and identify a range of other issues and priorities.

## 4.3.

Initial results are attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The key findings are as follows and a comparison from the previous survey, undertaken during April and May 2016, is shown in brackets:

<b>Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey</b>	<b>Performance of Council's Housing Services</b>
Overall service provided by landlord (indicator 1).	84% satisfaction (87%).
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (charter indicator 3).	87% rating as very or fairly good (91%).
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (charter indicator 6).	63% satisfaction (66%).
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the condition of their home when moving in (charter indicator 9).	73% satisfaction (88%).
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (charter indicator 10).	76% satisfaction (83%).
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (charter indicator 16).	82% satisfaction (82%).
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (charter indicator 17).	76% satisfaction (81%).
Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money (charter indicator 29).	73% rating a good or fairly good (77%).

#### **4.4.**

Tenants were asked about their contact with the Council's Housing Service in the last 12 months.

- 55% had contacted the Council's Housing Service in past 12 months.
- Telephone contact was considered the most common method of contact (69%).
- 77% reported it was easy to get hold of the right person.
- 84% say staff were helpful.
- 80% thought their query was answered within a reasonable time.
- 72% were satisfied with the outcome of their query though 21% were dissatisfied.

#### **4.5.**

When asked for their overall view of the quality of customer service provided by the Council's Housing Service, 86% of respondents said it was very good or good (45% and 41% respectively).

#### **4.6.**

While 73% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the standard of their home (44% and 29% respectively), they also reported certain areas of dissatisfaction, as follows:

- 37% dissatisfaction with amount of outdoor storage space.
- 24% dissatisfaction with amount of indoor storage space.
- 24% dissatisfaction with heating system.
- 18% dissatisfaction with noise insulation between neighbours.
- 20% dissatisfaction with the dining area.
- 16% dissatisfaction with number and position of electrical sockets.
- 14% dissatisfaction with the number of kitchen units.

#### **4.7.**

Of those tenants who had moved in the last 12 months, the level of satisfaction with aspects of the moving service was as follows:

- Information on housing options (71%).
- Clarity of allocations process (77%).
- Length of time it took to get your home (78%).
- Advice and support received (66%).
- Cleanliness of home (76%).
- Level of decoration grant (66%).
- Decorative condition (58%).

#### **4.8.**

Tenants who had repair or maintenance work undertaken over the last 12 months, were asked about their general level of satisfaction. 83% were either very or fairly satisfied (50% and 33% respectively). This is broken down further as follows:

- 92% were satisfied at the attitude of Housing Service.
- 94% were satisfied at the ease of reporting repairs.
- 94% were satisfied with the attitude of workers.
- 90% believed that workers tidied up after themselves.
- 91% were satisfied with arrangements for access.
- 89% were satisfied with the overall quality of work.
- 88% were satisfied with the time taken to complete the work.
- 80% were satisfied that the repair was done “right first time”.

#### **4.9.**

Tenants were also asked various questions about rent. This included how they thought rent levels compared with those of similar properties from other landlords in the area. Responses showed that 27% felt it was much the same and a further 41% believed it was slightly less expensive.

#### **4.10.**

As regards arrears, 9% advised that they are currently in arrears and 18% say they have been in arrears. Of those that expressed a view:

- 33% think the Council takes a reasonable approach to arrears.
- 7% think it is too lenient.
- 3% think it is too strict.
- 56% don't know or have no opinion.

#### **4.11.**

In respect of the extent tenants felt safe in their neighbourhood, 91% advised that they felt very or fairly safe (being 58% and 33% respectively).

#### **4.12.**

The most common neighbourhood problems were:

- Dog fouling (21% felt it was a serious problem).
- Inconsiderate parking (14% felt it was a serious problem).
- Drug dealing (6% felt it was a serious problem).
- Noisy neighbours (4% felt it was a serious problem).
- Rubbish (4% felt it was a serious problem).

#### **4.13.**

As regards various statements in respect of the Council's Housing Services (respondents choosing "strongly agree" or "agree"):

- 89% found staff friendly and approachable.
- 82% found staff knowledgeable.
- 84% considered tenants were treated fairly and with respect.
- 73% trusted the Housing Service.
- 74% felt the Housing Service had a good reputation.
- 61% believed appropriate support was provided for tenants who needed adaptations.
- 68% felt their individual needs were recognised.
- 73% felt they received clear information about how rent and other money is spent.

#### **4.14.**

When asked to rank which specific aspects of the service were most important to them, tenants chose as follows:

- Overall quality of home 65%.
- Energy efficiency of property 51%.
- The quality of repairs and maintenance service 38%.
- The value for money of rents 32%.

#### **4.15.**

When asked to rank which specific aspects of the service were least important to them, tenants chose as follows:

- Opportunities to participate in landlord decision making 64%.
- Communication from the Housing Service about its services and decisions 40%.
- The Housing Service making more houses available for people to rent 30%.

#### **4.16.**

The survey also sought information on tenant profiling including demographic information and data relating to their occupation and income levels. In addition the survey considered what proportion of tenants had access to the internet and what online services they use. 68% indicated they had access to the internet and of those 94% had access to the internet at home. The most commonly used devices were smartphone (58%), laptop (55%), and tablet (52%).

#### **4.17.**

Overall, the results of the tenant survey are very positive and provide a range of useful information to the Council. The questions asked, along with percentage responses to each question, are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

## **5. Links to Council Plan**

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority of Caring Communities.

## **6. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan**

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Living Well.

## **7. Financial Implications**

There are no significant financial implications arising directly as a result of this noting report.

## **8. Legal Aspects**

### **8.1.**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 section 31 introduced changes to the basis on which the Scottish Housing Regulator would be responsible for regulating housing services.

### **8.2.**

The Charter does not replace any of the legal duties that apply to social landlords, but in several cases the outcomes describe the results social landlords should achieve in meeting their legal duties.

### **8.3.**

Therefore although not laid down formally in legislation, the Scottish Social Housing Charter determines the outcomes against which social landlords will be regulated. This includes a requirement for a regular tenants' satisfaction survey to be undertaken and for a performance report to be published.

## **9. Contact Officers**

Wilfred Weir, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2401, Email [wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk).

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, extension 2177, Email [frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk).

## **10. Appendix**

Appendix 1: Tenant Satisfaction Survey, undertaken by IBP, with responses.