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Report of Chief Officer Housing Management

Report to: **Housing Advisory Board**

Date: **2 May 2017**

Subject: **STAR Survey 2016/17 – Headline Findings**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐ Yes	x No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	x Yes	☐ No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	x No

Summary of main issues

In November / December 2016, Housing Leeds conducted a satisfaction survey of its tenants. This report summarises the responses to the survey and compares it to a similar survey conducted in 2014.

In general the results showed a mixed picture, with many key indicators maintaining levels of satisfaction from the last survey.

- The key question - overall satisfaction with services – should be considered as remaining constant at 76% (despite a drop of -1% from the previous survey as the difference is within tolerance of the +/-1.7% confidence interval).

- Areas of increased satisfaction included:
  - That your landlord treats you fairly;
  - Heating and insulation is good at keeping your home warm in winter;
  - Advice and support on managing finances and paying rent / service charges; and
  - Grounds maintenance, such as grass cutting.

- Areas showing decreased satisfaction included:

- Neighbourhood as a place to live;
  - The way the landlord deals with complaints;
  - The way the landlord deals with anti-social behaviour; and
  - Some indicators from the East of the city, for example, overall satisfaction, repairs and maintenance, and dealing with enquiries.

- As noted previously, there are distinct differences in satisfaction related to age, with younger tenants significantly less satisfied than older tenants.

- The survey also showed that just over two thirds of tenants find it useful to have an annual visit to discuss their tenancy.

Recommendations

That the Housing Advisory Board note the findings of the survey along with the detailed analysis in the accompanying presentation.

2 Purpose of this report

2.1 To provide headline findings from the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) 2016/17 survey and an analysis of key themes.

3 Background information

3.1 A postal survey was sent to a representative stratified random sample of 15,000 general needs tenants of Housing Leeds, and all tenants of Belle Isle TMO in November/December 2016. 4,000 of these tenants had email addresses and were sent emails too to allow them the option of completing the survey online if they preferred.

3.2 In addition, new approaches were piloted in order to test low cost methods of online engagement and to attract more responses from younger tenants. 11,000 additional emails were sent to tenants with known email addresses, and online responses called for through the Tenant newsletter, social media – Housing Leeds Facebook and Twitter, and the Housing Leeds website.

3.3 In total, 3117 responses were received from the robust random sample with a further 1049 online responses. These additional online responses were found to skew the overall findings, since they were outside the representative random sample and were subject to a 'mode effect' (where the method of carrying out the research affects the responses made). They were therefore excluded from the reported performance figures, but have been used to gain further insight and any comments made have been reviewed.

3.4 The findings from the robust random sample are accurate and representative at: City level to +/- 1.7%, Area level to +/- 3%, (BITMO 4.9%) and at Ward level to +/- 10%. At City level this means that differences of less than 2% (up or down) cannot be considered as robust (and therefore not significant).

3.5 The previous STAR survey took place two years previously in 2014. By using the results from the same methodology and many of the same questions we are able to compare trends around the changing views of tenants.

3.6 The Intelligence and Policy Service carried out the STAR survey entirely in house, using council resources including the Print and Mail Room, and completed the project at a cost of around £9K. This is a reduction of £5k compared to the cost of the survey in 2014, as no reminder survey was sent to tenants receiving the postal survey.

4 Key findings from STAR 2016 survey

In general the results showed a mixed picture, with many key indicators maintaining levels of satisfaction from the last survey.

4.1 **Overall satisfaction with services** - should be considered as remaining constant at 76%, despite a drop of -1% from the previous survey, as the difference is within the confidence interval (+/- 2%) and we can only be 'certain' that the result lies somewhere between 74% and 78%.

4.2 **Successes**

- Tenants reported increased satisfaction that their **landlord treats them fairly**, a core value for Leeds City Council, rising from 68% to 72% city wide;

- Particularly positive, a significant increased percentage of tenants reported that their **heating and insulation is good at keeping their home warm in winter**, rising from 56% to 63% city wide, reflecting improvements to homes in the previous two years;

- Increase in satisfaction for **advice and support on managing finances and paying rent / service charges** rising from 63% to 66% citywide. Actions to help tenants in financial difficulty including the development of an enhanced offer were a key outcome of the previous STAR survey; and

- Satisfaction with **grounds maintenance**, such as grass cutting rose from 66% to 69%.

4.3 **Results showing decreased satisfaction included:**

- **Neighbourhood as a place to live,** with satisfaction falling from 76% to 72% city wide. In addition, satisfaction with the **overall appearance of the neighbourhood** changed from 68% in 2014 to 66% in 2016. However the continuing importance of the local neighbourhood for tenants is reflected in the service priorities, with 'Your neighbourhood as a place to live' remaining the third priority for tenants.

- **The way the landlord deals with anti-social behaviour,** with satisfaction down 5% to 55%. This is a perception question and the responses may include the views of all tenants, regardless of whether they have made a complaint, or could be perceived to be responsible for causing anti-social behaviour.

- Some indicators from tenants living in the **East** of the city. **Overall satisfaction with services provided** decreased 6% to 69%, **satisfaction with repairs and maintenance** decreased 10% to 60%, **satisfaction with the way your landlord deals with enquiries** decreased 9% to 63%.

4.4 **Results across different themes**

- The top three **tenant priorities** remain 'repairs and maintenance', 'the overall quality of the home', and 'your neighbourhood as a place to live'. 'Value for money for your rent' in fourth position is increasing as a priority for tenants.

- **Your home**:

  - Satisfaction with the **overall quality of the home**, and **repairs and maintenance** remain constant city wide at 70% / 71%.

  - Thinking about the last repair carried out, tenants reported high satisfaction with a new question on the **ease of reporting** the repair, 84%. However, satisfaction with the **speed of the repair** decreased 2% to 72% city wide.

- **Your neighbourhood:**

    - A new question asking to **what extent respondents agreed that the overall appearance of the neighbourhood is mainly the responsibility of local residents** showed two thirds agreed, 67%, with a fifth strongly agreeing.

    - A trend question asking to what extent possible indicators were an issue in their neighbourhood showed issues were more likely to be rated as a 'major issue' compared to 2014. **Car parking** remains the **main major issue** for 35% of tenants, followed by **rubbish or litter** (29% of tenants) and **dog fouling** (28%).

- **Customer service questions**:

    - Nearly four in five tenants, 78% agreed **staff were friendly and approachable**, and just over two thirds of tenants, 69%, found it **useful to have an annual visit to discuss their tenancy**.

    - A national comparator question, looking at how easy an organisation makes it for a customer to handle their issue, was included for the first time. Responses showed the '**customer effort'** score is the same as the UKCSI[1] average of 4.8.

- **Finances and life satisfaction:**

    - Satisfaction that **rent provides good value for money** has risen by +2% (77%), perhaps reflecting the small drop in rent charges.

    - An increase of +3% (26%) in tenants reported that **welfare reform has had a large impact** on them.

    - Surprisingly a significant drop -8% (19%) in tenants reported that they are in **financial difficulty** compared to 2014 which runs contrary to what we might expect.

    - A new national question looking at wellbeing asked tenants about their **overall satisfaction with their life nowadays**. Responses showed life satisfaction was 7.3 out of 10 which is considered high and broadly equal to the Leeds average of 7.7.

4.5 **Other findings of note:**

- As in 2014, comparison across key questions in the survey for different demographic groups showed **younger tenants to be significantly less satisfied than older tenants.**

- **Key drivers** identified that affected overall tenant satisfaction were:

    - Providing effective and efficient service, being treated fairly, repairs and maintenance, and overall quality of the home,

[1] UK Customer Satisfaction Index surveys customers from 244 organisations.

- The key tenant demographic drivers for satisfaction were satisfaction with life nowadays, age and current financial position (with those finding it difficult influencing lower satisfaction).

5 Corporate Considerations

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- The STAR survey is a key consultation tool, which collects tenant feedback around services provided and consults on their priorities.

- Tenants were asked if they want to get involved – and engagement teams are contacting interested tenants.

5.7 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- The survey findings combined with what we already know about tenants have been used to identify variations in the opinions and priorities of different social and demographic groups, which can be used to support future service development.

5.8 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- The Best Council Plan includes the objective of ensuring high quality public services, with a focus on improving customer satisfaction. The STAR survey is a key tool for assessing whether this best council objective has been met.

5.9 Resources and value for money

- The STAR survey was carried out using internal print, data entry and mail services and final costs are expected to be around £9K.

5.10 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- The STAR survey is a confidential survey, subject to data protection laws around the use of market research.

6 Recommendations

6.11 That the Housing Advisory Board note the findings of the survey along with the detailed analysis in the accompanying presentation.