

Report of Chief Officer Housing Management

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 2 May 2017

Subject: STAR Survey – Next Steps

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

Housing Leeds undertakes a Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) every two years to measure the satisfaction of tenants with the services provided by their landlord. Results have been analysed from the most recent survey in November 2016, with overall satisfaction remaining at 76%.

A STAR Action Plan has been developed, outlining service improvements across specific areas of concern that have been highlighted as a result of the survey analysis, in order to improve customer satisfaction in these areas. This will be the focus of the service for the next 12-24 months.

Progress will be measured via improved analysis of ongoing customer satisfaction surveys, complaints and service requests on social media, and service improvement opportunities will be identified by maximising the revised Tenant Engagement Framework to take advantage of wider digital engagement opportunities such as SNAP e-surveys, and the customer self-service portal. The Action Plan will be regularly monitored by the joint Housing Management and Property and Contracts Senior Management Team Meeting, and reported to tenant engagement groups and Housing Advisory Board.

Recommendation

That Housing Advisory Board offer comment on the STAR Action Plan, along with proposals for ongoing monitoring and wider tenant engagement activity planned to increase communication opportunities with all tenants through digital engagement.

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update the Housing Advisory Board on actions taken by Housing Leeds following the STAR Survey, and in particular the following:

- The development of a STAR Action Plan, outlining how Housing Leeds intends to deliver service improvements in order to improve customer satisfaction.
- How Housing Leeds will monitor the delivery of service improvements through the STAR Action Plan.
- Plans to undertake ongoing surveys which will evidence whether service improvements are having the desired impact on customer satisfaction.
- Wider tenant engagement activity planned to increase communication opportunities with all tenants through increased digital engagement.

2 Background information

2.1 Housing Leeds undertakes a Survey of Tenants And Residents (STAR) every two years, in order to measure the satisfaction of tenants and residents with the services provided by Housing Leeds as the landlord. The last survey was undertaken during autumn 2016.

2.2 The overall satisfaction of tenants and residents with services provided has remained constant, at 76%. A summary of the key outcomes of the survey are included within the separate presentation.

2.3 Housing Leeds is strongly committed to improving customer satisfaction with services provided. Following the recent STAR survey, Housing Leeds has worked with its key partners to develop an action plan, highlighting the main areas that the service will focus on over the next 12 – 24 months in order to improve the quality of services and increase customer satisfaction. A copy of the action plan is attached in appendix 1.

2.4 While the STAR survey is only undertaken once every 2 years, Housing Leeds undertakes ongoing customer surveys and provides other opportunities for customers to provide feedback on the quality of services provided. We plan to review and develop these ongoing surveys in order to ensure that they are aligned to the priority areas identified in the STAR action plan, and will use the performance outcomes to measure progress in delivering the action plan.

3 Main issues

3.5 The key areas from the STAR survey which have been identified as a priority for Housing Leeds in order to increase customer satisfaction are as follows:

Customer care

- Listening to tenants and acting on what we say we will do;
- Timeliness of answering calls;
- Clearly explaining the next steps to the tenant in relation to their enquiry so that they are clear about the process and timescales;

Being treated fairly

- Communicating more effectively with tenants around what levels of service / outcomes can be expected e.g. lettings, home improvements., in order to more effectively manage customer expectations;

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- Improving the way that we manage noise nuisance as the key driver for dissatisfaction with how we deal with ASB;
- Maximising community safety in blocks / areas with high incidences of ASB;
- Ensuring that we effectively support vulnerable tenants;

Lettings

- More clearly communicating rehousing chances and managing expectations;

Repairs

- Addressing inequalities in satisfaction in the east of the city;
- Improving the customer experience and increasing the number of repairs completed right first time;

Quality of the Home

- Reducing instances of damp in properties;
- Addressing inequalities in satisfaction in the east of the city;

Working Age Tenants

- Understanding and responding to the issues faced by younger tenants, who remain less satisfied with the quality of services;

Area differences

- Understanding some area variations in satisfaction and responding to more local issues;

3.6 The STAR Action Plan in Appendix 1 identifies what actions will be taken for each of the key service improvement priorities over the next 12-24 months, in order to achieve an improvement in customer satisfaction.

Monitoring Progress of the STAR Action Plan

3.7 The delivery of the STAR Action Plan will be monitored by Housing Leeds and progress reported to the joint Housing Management and Property and Contracts Senior Management Team Meeting on a quarterly basis, and to VITAL on a six monthly basis.

- 3.8 Progress will also be reported to Housing Advisory Board on a six monthly basis, with the next update in November 2017.
- 3.9 The next STAR survey will be completed in autumn 2018. This will be the next point when a true comparison of customer satisfaction will be available. In monitoring the delivery of the STAR Action Plan it is important that we are able to measure the impact of the delivery of actions on customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis over the next two years.
- 3.10 Housing Leeds already receives customer feedback in relation to a number of key services from a number of transactional surveys, as follows:
- Repairs Satisfaction Survey – satisfaction with the quality of individual repairs in the home;
 - Planned Works Survey – satisfaction with the quality of investment work undertaken in the home;
 - New Home Survey – satisfaction of new tenants in their home;
 - Adaptations Survey – satisfaction with adaptations undertaken;
 - Customer Services Survey – satisfaction with the contact, either to the Contact Centre or Community Hub.
- 3.11 Customer satisfaction from these surveys is monitored, and feedback is used to pick up particular issues with individual customers. However we could be more effective in undertaking more detailed analysis of feedback to understand issues being raised and particular areas of dissatisfaction - by customer group, property type, area etc.
- 3.12 We also receive other direct customer feedback through complaints, requests for service and social media, which provides themed feedback on the particular areas of dis-satisfaction. This feedback offers invaluable information which is used to inform service improvement opportunities, including procedural changes or staff training priorities.
- 3.13 There are also a number of other areas which can be used to indicate levels of customer satisfaction, as follows:
- Website analysis – of use of housing pages to identify whether they are effectively providing information needed by customers and feedback to ‘Did you find the information you were looking for?’;
 - Analysis of repeat contact / failure demand – to identify themes to where a tenant’s enquiry is not addressed at the first point of contact.
 - Performance on particular transaction types, e.g. % calls answered, repairs completed right first time, adaptations completed within timescale etc.
- 3.14 In monitoring the STAR Action Plan, success measures will be identified for each of the key areas of the action plan, and these will be used to monitor whether there is either an actual increase in customer satisfaction for particular transactions, or an improvement in service performance which indicates that customer satisfaction will also increase. It is proposed that these success measures are developed jointly

between officers and VITAL and reported back to HAB as part of the first progress report.

Evaluation of the STAR Survey Approach

- 3.15 STAR is an established framework for undertaking perception surveys of tenants and residents, which has been used widely within the housing sector since 2011. Due to its widespread use in the sector over a number of years, the STAR methodology offers organisations the ability to consistently measure trends over time.
- 3.16 The 2016 STAR survey followed both the previous approach of using a robust representative sample, as well as piloting greater options for digital engagement. Full details to the 2016 approach are provided in Background Information (paragraph 3) of the accompanying STAR Survey Findings HAB Report.
- 3.17 Opening up the survey to online respondents encouraged more people, and especially younger people, to complete the survey and provided a low cost model for collecting feedback in addition to the representative sample.
- 3.18 An evaluation of the STAR survey approach will be undertaken during 2017 to consider how we do future STAR surveys to make sure we can maximise the digital survey option. The outcome of this evaluation will be reported to HAB as part of the first progress report, in November 2017.

Wider Tenant Engagement Opportunities

- 3.19 In addition to the learning outcomes from existing surveys, complaints and social media there are a number of tenant engagement opportunities which can be used to better understand, or seek customer satisfaction on specific issues. These include the following:

Use of SNAP E-Surveys

- Targeted emails to tenants who have recently made a particular transaction to review the customer experience;
- Targeted emails to tenants who are of a particular customer profile to seek views that are particular to that customer group, e.g. younger tenants, tenants in high rise;
- Making better use of the Annual Home Visit information, especially where further advice can be given by sending targeted emails;
- Promoted on social media to seek more general views;
- Via mobile technology at Tenants And Residents Association meetings, summer galas /fetes and other community events;

Face to face Meetings

- One off meetings with a small group of tenants who have experienced a particular transaction or of a particular customer group to seek their views on the customer experience;
- Task and finish group with a small group of tenants working with us for a short period to provide input into a service improvement.

Use of Customer Self-Service Platform

- Working closely with the new housing ICT solution to develop the customer self-service platform to explore opportunities for tenants to give instant feedback on their experience in accessing services (including managing their rent account, ordering repairs or tracking a complaint), via the website or smartphone app.

General Data Protection Regulation

- 3.20 The Data Protection Act 1998 (“the DPA”) is being replaced by the new General Data Protection Regulation (“the GDPR”), which will become effective in May 2018. The new GDPR will introduce significant changes to the current data protection rules and imposes new and considerably more stringent requirements for the handling of personal data. Consent will become harder to rely on as a legal basis for processing as the GDPR requires a very high standard of consent.
- 3.21 Housing Leeds is currently working with the Digital and Information Service to consider the potential impact of the regulation on our plans to expand digital engagement across the service. We are also part of a northern networking group which is working with the Information Commission to define the impact for social landlords.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.2 The STAR survey is a method of tenant consultation and engagement that Housing Leeds use to understand the level of satisfaction among tenants, across different areas of the housing service. The Action Plan has been developed in consultation with senior officers to address areas where improvement opportunities have been identified. These will be monitored using success measures, which will be defined jointly with tenants via the Strategic Tenant Body, VITAL.
- 4.3 Progress against these success measures will then be shared with VITAL on a six monthly basis, but elements of the plan relating to different service areas will also be closely monitored by key service improvement tenant groups such as the Repairs and Capital Investment Group. Task and finish groups can also be set up to engage with specific customer groups, or about specific issues such as dealing with noise nuisance and ASB.

5 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.1 Equality Analysis of the STAR findings has been undertaken in order to better understand any trends in dissatisfaction, for example analysis shows that working age tenants are less satisfied with services overall. Trends such as these have been taken into account in developing the action plan, for example including actions to review information for younger tenants and develop repairs self-service platform through the new Housing ICT solution, with engagement from younger tenants.
- 5.2 The action plan also commits to undertaking equality impact assessments of policy and procedure changes, to ensure that any actual or potential negative impacts for particular equality groups are mitigated.

6 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 6.1 Committing to and delivering against the action plan in response to the outcomes of the STAR survey will support the delivery of the key themes of the Housing Strategy and a number of strategic Council documents, including the Best Council Plan.

7 Resources and value for money

- 7.1 The action plan outlines service improvement actions which aim to improve performance and customer satisfaction. Whilst some resource will need to be invested in order to deliver these actions, such as analysis, process review and staff training, the result should mean savings are made overall, for example a reduction in repeat/avoidable contact, fewer complaints, increased digital interactions or lower costs associated with disrepair.

8 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 8.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

9 Risk management

- 9.1 Adopting and delivering the Action Plan in response to STAR survey helps to mitigate the risk of Leeds City Council's reputation as a landlord. More specifically it seeks to address risks associated with inequalities in satisfaction of home quality and repairs service in the east of the city.
- 9.2 The action plan also seeks to mitigate any risks associated with how we respond to the STAR survey, for example any impact of the General Data Protection Regulation.

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 The STAR Survey is an important indicator of customer satisfaction with services provided by landlords, and provides a wealth of information which can be used to highlight areas which are a priority for service improvement.
- 10.2 The 2016 STAR Survey has highlighted a number of priorities for improvement, and an action plan has been developed which identifies how we plan to deliver service improvements in order to improve customer satisfaction.
- 10.3 The STAR Action Plan will be monitored during 2017/18 and progress will be reported to Housing Advisory Board on a six monthly basis.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 That Housing Advisory Board offer comment on the STAR Action Plan, along with proposals for ongoing monitoring and wider tenant engagement activity planned to increase communication opportunities with all tenants through digital engagement.