



To: Executive Councillor for Housing:  
Councillor Kevin Price  
Report by: Catherine Buckle/James Bull  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 10/3/2015  
Wards affected: All wards containing Council Housing

## **OUTCOMES OF THE 2014 TENANT & LEASEHOLDER SATISFACTION SURVEYS AND PROPOSALS GOING FORWARD**

### **Not a Key Decision**

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#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder surveys were carried out in June 2014. NWA Consultants were successful in securing the contract for the work following a formal tendering process which included tenants and leaseholders on the selection panel.
- 1.2 The surveys followed the traditional, postal method, however for the first time, we did offer tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to complete the survey online.
- 1.3 All tenants (6366 general needs & 498 sheltered tenants) and leaseholders (1113) were invited to take part in the survey, as opposed to the random samples drawn in previous years.
- 1.4 As the survey was a census approach as opposed to a random sample, we also took the opportunity to ask for an update on household data – ethnicity, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and NI numbers, to better improve our ability to locate tenants on our systems when they contacted us. NWA also used the data to analyse responses (The data returned to us did not include the questionnaire responses so no individual's responses could be identified).
- 1.3 In total, the survey was responded to by 1888 tenants and 191 leaseholders; response rates of 28% and 18% respectively.
- 1.4 Following presentation of the final results, some further reports were commissioned that start to look further into where specific groups of tenants have lower than average satisfaction.

- 1.5 The key groups of tenants where satisfaction was lower overall were younger tenants (18-34 year olds), tenants dissatisfied with the value for money of their rent and/or services charges, tenants dissatisfied with the condition of their property and tenants who live in Arbury, East Chesterton and Petersfield.
- 1.6 A programme of further work (Appendix A) has been developed in partnership with Housing managers, tenant & leaseholder reps, the resident involvement team and NWA consultants to be carried forward in 2015/16, in preparation for the 2016/17 Survey.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) ***Agree the approach to further exploring perceptions of and reasons for any lower levels of satisfaction across the range of housing services, and methods to address them, as outlined in Appendix A.***

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The 2014 Tenant & Leaseholder surveys were carried out in June 2014. The surveys were designed and planned in partnership with both tenant and leaseholder representatives. Other than seven 'core' questions that are included as part of the Housemark benchmarking programme, the content of the survey could be designed freely following the end of the prescribed STATUS questionnaire in 2010.
- 3.2 Selecting the consultants to carry out the work was undertaken by a project team that included tenant and leaseholder representatives. The selection process followed the corporate approach to invite providers to submit a request for quotation, as the value of the contract was less than £49,999.
- 3.3 The survey was designed to be balanced between requests for satisfaction levels with opinion about future priorities and preferred areas of spend. There was also opportunity for tenants and residents to put forward their own suggestions for where they felt improvement in the housing service was particularly needed. These open comments have been incorporated with the overall results.

## **Summary of results**

- 3.4 Satisfaction overall with the service provided by the landlord has remained steady since 2008; 80% in 2014, 80% in 2012 and 82% in

2008. In comparison to our peers<sup>1</sup> and when combined with the housing for older people survey results (this becomes 83.3% when combined), this puts us below average (third 'quartile') against other local authorities. The best authorities scored 87% and above for this question.

- 3.5 Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live has also stayed consistently at 81% since 2012.
- 3.6 Satisfaction with quality of the home has decreased slightly from 80% in 2012 to 76% in 2014 and condition of the home from 80% in 2012 to 74% in 2014. Other areas that have shown a decrease in satisfaction include the repairs service provided by the landlord - 84% to 76% (general needs and housing for older people results combined) and rent providing value for money – 79% to 73% (combined results). The result for satisfaction with value for money of rent puts us in the bottom quartile when compare to our peers; top scorers achieved 83% or above for this question.
- 3.7 Tenants & leaseholders were also asked to rank in order their priorities for improvements in their neighbourhood. The results showed that the top priorities for tenants were pathways, security measures and parking, and leaseholders were communal areas, pathways and parking.
- 3.8 Tenants and Leaseholders were also asked to choose how they thought the housing service should prioritise investment in the future (this question was also asked in the 2012 survey). Overwhelmingly for general needs tenants, building new council housing was again voted top priority at 38% (23% in 2012) and sheltered tenants again voted for the provision of sheltered accommodation for elderly or vulnerable tenants; a rise from 26% in 2012 to 31% in 2014. Leaseholders also chose building new council housing as their priority (19.4%).

### **Regression-based key driver analysis**

- 3.9 NWA Consultants have provided the housing service with a 'key-driver analysis' further analyses has been undertaken to ascertain the drivers of satisfaction. The tool has identified those services that, if perceived to be 'poor' or show lower areas of satisfaction, then the overall levels of satisfaction will be lower. The full key driver analysis is available at Appendix C, but by using this, combined with the expertise of NWA Consultants and Housing officers, the following areas have been identified as the Housing focus for a work programme to be delivered in 2015/16: (further detail shown at Appendix A):

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<sup>1</sup> Housemark benchmarking results 2013/14  
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- a) ***Image***
- b) ***Managing expectations***
- c) ***Perception of 'waste'***

### **Improvement work already underway**

3.10 A number of key initiatives are already scheduled to be delivered in 2015/16 and beyond within the Housing Service, that will be supported by the programme of work in Appendix A:

- a) The publication of 5-year Capital investment programme to all tenants and leaseholders, so our customers can track when improvements to their homes are scheduled to take place by ward.
- b) The appointment of a new contractor – TSG Building Services. They will deliver the rolling programme of new kitchens and bathrooms, central heating, boilers, electrics, disabled adaptations and fencing. Tenant and leaseholder representatives helped with the competitive tendering process that selected TSG. The company have won a range of awards, including as Heating Contractor and Energy Efficiency Installer of the Year.
- c) The appointment of a new communal areas building cleaning contractor.
- d) An ambitious and expanding programme of projects for delivery of new and re-developed Council owned social housing across the city that are being delivered using a number of different arrangements with private sector developers and partners. The programme has been expanded from an original planned provision of 146 new housing units to 314 units, which now includes developments on Clay Farm and land owned by Homerton College as well as HRA sites).
- e) The introduction of a new 'Rent Setting Policy' for 2015/16, that takes into consideration the need to keep rents affordable within the City, ceasing to move current tenants to target rent level, and keeping to a target of 60-65% of market<sup>2</sup> rent level in general; except for new build properties, that will be delivered at rents of between 60% and 80% of market rent levels, dependent upon scheme mix and scheme viability, thus allowing for rents to be set at as low as 60% where viable, but still complying with the government guideline that rents should be set at up to 80%.
- f) The commitment to a new *City Homes Estate Improvement Programme*, with a view to increasing the future level of investment in our estates.

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<sup>2</sup>rents will be assessed against the latest available market data at that time as a check how they compare with the 60% target level, bearing in mind that market rents can vary significantly over time and depending on the area of the city analysed.

- g) Complaints received included on repairs team briefings for discussion and lessons learnt.
- h) An increase in the City Homes staffing team to help support tenants experiencing financial pressures in the current climate and as a pre-emptive measure to address the introduction of Welfare Reform due to start in 2016.

Another key feature of the further programme of work attached at Appendix A will be to support the **Fundamental review of the HRA** being led by the Director of Customer & Community Services and Heads of Service, with the aim of delivering a budget profile across all housing services that meets identified and prioritised spending need over the coming years and has achieved the right balance between new build, existing stock maintenance and housing management functions. Ensuring the service is learning and acting upon the messages being received from its tenants and leaseholders as well as directing resources in a way that has the greatest impact on the lives of current and future tenants and leaseholders is a critical element of this.

#### **4. Implications**

##### **(a) Financial Implications**

The budget for completing the tenant's survey is spread evenly across financial years, despite the survey only being undertaken formally every two years. This means that an element of annual activity is already budgeted for, for further small survey sampling, i.e. focus groups. The programme of workshops, focus groups and data analysis suggested by NWA has an estimated value of around £5,500, which will be met from existing budgets. NWA have also either priced or suggested further options to support the programme; whether we take these up will be decided by staff and Housing Committee reps at an appropriate time throughout the course of the work.

##### **(b) Staffing Implications**

The work programme will be delivered within current structures and alongside tenant and leaseholder representatives. It is expected that key representation will be needed from City Homes, Estates and Facilities and Development throughout the programme of work.

##### **(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

An equality impact assessment has been completed on the 2015/16 work programme, and is attached at Appendix B.

#### (d) **Environmental Implications:**

The results of the 2014 surveys have already identified areas of improvement required within our estates that will be addressed through either the current work programmes listed in this report, or via any further improvement work emanating from work programme to be carried out in 2015/16.

#### (e) **Procurement**

NWA consultants were commissioned at the start of the project to carry out further work as required once the results had been analysed by housing managers. It is not intended to undertake any further procurement at this stage.

#### (f) **Consultation and communication**

The nature of the project is to undertake further consultation with our tenants and leaseholders. It is expected that Open Door will be the main platform for engaging with our tenants. Other stakeholders including housing managers, heads of service and the corporate consultation team will be kept abreast of any consultations being carried out, and the work will be added to the corporate consultations list for publishing on the website.

'You said it, we did it' articles will be published in Open door as the programme of improvement work progresses.

#### (g) **Community Safety**

Community safety will be looked at as part of the project, as safety concerns on estates were raised as an issue in the surveys.

### **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. General Needs Report – 2014
2. Older People Report – 2014
3. Leaseholders Report - 2014

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### **6. Appendices**

Appendix A – Work programme 2015/16

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix C – Key Driver Analysis – General Needs Survey results

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## 7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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