

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

4 December 2014

Report by Director of Environment

HOUSING SERVICES TENANT SURVEY 2014

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Cabinet on the results of the Housing Services Tenant Survey 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet recognise the key areas where improvement has been achieved and also areas required for future improvement.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) requires all social landlords to undertake a tenant survey at least once every 3 years. Housing Services have undertaken two previous surveys in 2010 and 2012.
4. For previous surveys the data has been collected by posting a paper survey to every council tenancy with an average return rate of just over 500 surveys. In 2014 Housing Services opted to use a market research company and undertake face to face surveys.
5. A total of 501 tenants took part in the survey during the fieldwork period 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014 to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014.
6. Tenants were selected to ensure the results represent the full tenant body in terms of age, gender and settlement area.
7. The sample size was chosen to ensure compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The potential margin of error is +-4.1% which is within the +-5% limit set by the SHR.
8. The report is split into two parts. Report 1 details the results from 460 tenants in non sheltered accommodation. Report 2 details the results from 41 tenants of sheltered accommodation.
9. The sheltered accommodation survey contained additional questions relating to the housing support services provided. This is to ensure compliance with the regulations set out by the Care Inspectorate.
10. Copies of both reports are available in the Members' Lounge.

## REPORT

11. A key requirement of the survey was to provide accurate performance against customer satisfaction indicators set out in the SSHC. The results are as follows:

Indicator	2012 (East Renfrewshire Council Housing Services Tenant Survey)*	2014 (East Renfrewshire Council Housing Services Tenant Survey)	Average Scottish Councils 2014 (Source ARC*)
Overall satisfaction	71%	83%	82%
Keeping tenants informed	64%	85%	78%
Participation	56%	81%	82%
Standard of home	73%	84%	64%
Quality of home	74%	90%	79%
Repairs	77%	78%	69%
Neighbourhood management	73%	92%	75%
Value for money	76%	80%	81%

\*Annual Return on the Charter – submitted 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014

12. The 2014 results have shown a significant increase in satisfaction with Housing Services. Overall satisfaction has increased by 12%. East Renfrewshire Council Housing Services now performs above other Scottish Councils in 6 of the 8 indicator categories. The service performed lower than other Scottish Councils in the remaining 2 areas but only by 1%.

13. The general needs survey (Report 1) provides vital information on a number of key service areas:

- Tenant Priorities: tenants identified four service areas that are important to them, 1. being kept informed, 2. receiving an effective repairs service, 3. having their views taken into account, 4. receiving good customer service
- Repairs: tenants identified some key strengths with the repairs service including, ease of reporting a repair, the attitude of workers who carried out the repair and keeping dirt and mess to a minimum
- Online Services: the survey found that only 50% of all tenants have access to the internet and only a small amount use the website. Housing Services have a plan to develop and increase the use of online services but these results will also ensure that customers can use a range of mechanisms to contact the service
- Tenant Participation: Only 3% of tenants took part in their local tenants and residents association (TRA). This result demonstrates a need to ensure other methods of engagement are available for tenants. Housing Services continue to support local TRA's but have developed a range of mechanisms to allow tenants to engage with the service. This is set out in the Customer Engagement Strategy approved by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014

- Housing Improvements: Tenants were happy with the quality of their home but would like to see improvements in areas such as windows, guttering and external repairs including fencing and gardens
- Neighbourhoods: Satisfaction with local neighbourhoods was very high but key areas of improvement were identified such as rubbish and litter, pets and animals and noisy neighbours

14. The sheltered housing survey (Appendix 2) asked the same general questions and found a higher satisfaction rate than non sheltered tenants. The survey asked tenants in sheltered housing a range of questions linked to the housing support provided.

- Housing Support Plan: All residents have a prepared housing support plan and this is reviewed every 6 months. The report showed that some residents were still not clear of this issue and some awareness raising is required
- Care Inspectorate: Housing Services ensure that all complexes have leaflets and posters advising residents on the Care Inspectorate but the report demonstrated that some residents were still unaware of this. This is an area that requires some awareness raising

15. Housing Services wish to ensure that the results of this survey are used to improve services. The survey has confirmed many of the issues already identified and being addressed as part of the Housing Services Improvement Plan. The market research company have also offered to undertake two focus groups with tenants. The housing support service in sheltered housing and the repairs service have been chosen as the topics.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

16. An assessment was undertaken to determine the cost to undertake this process in house or by an external company. The assessment found that it was more cost effective to outsource this piece of work in terms of quality, staff resources and timescales.

17. Companies were asked to bid through the quick quote process. The quick quote process provided a saving of over £2000.

## **CONSULTATION**

18. A summary of the results will be sent to all tenants via the Winter 2014/15 Housing newsletter.

19. The results will be used to inform the actions in the Customer Engagement Strategy. The results will also be used to plan Tenant Assemblies and key focus groups.

20. A copy of the report will be sent to all Tenant & Resident Associations.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

21. Some key services provided by Housing Services are done so in partnership with other council services. Therefore where improvement is required this may involve assistance from other services. These services will be provided with the results and joint working undertaken to make improvements.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

22. There are no implications associated with this report in terms of staffing, finance, property, legal, IT, equalities and sustainability.

23. The results of the survey underline the significant improvements that have been made in the last few years in relation to the delivery of Housing Services in East Renfrewshire. However the results also underline the need for continued investment in East Renfrewshire council housing.

24. This required investment has two key components. One relates to improvements required in relation to the stock itself – over 70% of council stock is over fifty years old and therefore the external components require to be renewed. As such investment is needed to repair ageing fencing, paving, damp proof courses and paintwork. This is essential if Housing Services are to fulfil its aim to provide people with “homes not houses”.

25. Another key component relates to service delivery. Housing Services have an ambitious programme to modernise and digitise service delivery in order to provide customers with a more customer focused and efficient service experience. For example there is a desire to enable customers to report and track repairs on line, to submit housing applications on line and similar initiatives. These developments require investment in IT services. However given that not all of Housing Services customers are “on line” this may result in an additional cost of service provision until “on line” capacity is more widespread.

26. The Housing Services Business plan is currently being revised with a view to providing additional resources in order to ensure that the appropriate finance is available to permit this investment in the service.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

27. The survey has shown significant improvements in tenant satisfaction across all of Housing Services. The report has also identified areas for further improvement and these will be fed into the Housing Services Improvement Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

28. It is recommended that the Cabinet recognise the key areas where improvement has been achieved and also areas required for future improvement.

Director of Environment

Further details can be obtained from Phil Daws Housing Services Manager on 0141 577 3186.

Convener contact details

Councillor Danny Devlin  
(Convener for Housing and Maintenance Services)

Home: 0141 580 0288  
Office: 0141 577 3107/8

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