

REPORT TITLE: TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

3 FEBRUARY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Chris Westwood, Cabinet Member for Housing

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

Tenant satisfaction surveys are an important tool to find out what's important to tenants and what they think about the service. The council has carried out tenant surveys for over 20 years under a mix of statutory and discretionary regimes.

This report presents the results from the second survey conducted under the new regulatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) format. This format has been introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to standardise the questions asked and make it possible to compare the performance of housing providers on issues that matter to tenants.

There are 12 TSMs which housing providers are required by the regulator to collect through an annual tenant satisfaction survey. This report also provides results for the previous year TSM results as a comparison. The housing service results are above Housemark median benchmark for 9 of the 12 indicators, at benchmark for complaints handling and below benchmark for making a positive contribution to neighbourhood, communal areas being clean and well maintained and dealing with Anti-social behaviour. Nevertheless, there has been a 7% increase in satisfaction scores in dealing with anti-social behaviour.

There was a 45% response rate to the 2024/25 survey carried out between September-November 2024. The council's results mirror the sector wide trend of reduced satisfaction levels across the indicators. The results for most of the TSMs are broadly in line with the average ARP Research (the organisation commissioned to carry out the survey on the council's behalf) benchmark median of other landlords for whom they have conducted surveys with TSM questions over the last 18 months. Handling of complaints and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are in line or slightly below the benchmark results.

The report makes service improvement recommendations based on tenant feedback from this year's survey results.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet Committee: Housing:

1. Note the survey results.
2. Note the work that is underway or proposed to address the four indicators that are below median benchmark.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
- 1.2 The council commissioned a housing research organisation to conduct the survey. ARP Research, included in their response details of maximising the use of digital processes (where permitted within the regulator's requirements for the survey), use of recycled and environmentally friendly products for printed materials, and how their operating model aims to keep transportation to a minimum
- 1.3 Homes for all
- 1.4 The survey provides data on the key issues for tenants when providing homes. Housing provision can be improved by listening to tenant views on what's important to them about their housing.
- 1.5 Vibrant Local Economy
- 1.6 The Housing service procurement of services in line with the council's procurement strategy provides potential opportunities to support significant expenditure into the local economy.
- 1.7 Living Well
- 1.8 Survey questions include opportunities for tenants to feedback to the council on matters relating to living well. In addition to how well maintained their home is; tenants were asked about how safe they feel in their homes, satisfaction with how the council deals with reports of anti-social behaviour along with the opportunity to provide feedback on subjects of their choice.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) includes a performance measure on whether tenants feel the council makes a positive contribution to the area.
- 1.9 Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.10 The survey provides a key opportunity for tenant feedback on the housing service. The data and feedback gathered gives insight into how the council is performing as a landlord from tenant perspective. It also helps the council to understand how we are performing against the sector.

Using survey feedback to inform service improvement plans and communicating effectively on what action the council has taken as a result of the survey results to ensure that the tenants voice is at the heart of service improvement.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications stemming from this report. The cost of the annual survey is contained within existing budgets.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The new Tenant Satisfaction Measures allow tenants to see how their landlord is performing compared to other landlords. The council is required to report the outcome of the annual survey to the RSH and to tenants. Any procurement required because of actions arising from this report will be conducted in compliance with Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules and national procurement legislation.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The 2025/26 HRA business plan includes identification of the need for annual revenue savings which include savings from staff resources. Implementation of the work programme will be assessed in the light of any changes in staff resources.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Overall satisfaction has dropped slightly by 2% to 76%. Although this is still above the sector median, results on satisfaction with the repairs service over the last 12 months and time taken to complete repairs have both reduced by 4%(satisfaction) and 6% (timeliness of repairs). Both are still comfortably above the median score across the sector and are likely to have impacted other scores.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) sets out the details of how housing providers are required to conduct tenant perception surveys to generate the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) data.
- 6.2 The survey was promoted through social media, the -housing newsletter and posters were displayed across housing schemes in the district. Staff leads were asked to promote the survey with their teams and encourage tenants to complete the survey. Email banners were provided to staff to help promote during the survey period of six weeks. Elected members were made aware of the surveys through the democratic services updates. TACT board members were briefed on the survey and also the Consumer Standard Group were asked to help promote the survey.
- 6.3 The webpage was updated to include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for additional information and contact details for any queries.

- 6.4 The survey results will be published on the housing webpage. The results will be shared with TACT board and Consumer Standard Groups to work collaboratively on prioritising service improvement actions.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Survey responses raised issues with the repairs and maintenance service and heating and energy efficient saving endorsing the work of the council homes retrofit reprogramme of work in relation to providing energy saving homes.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 The RSH conducted their own impact assessment as the survey is statutory requirement for all housing providers. The survey guidance produced by the regulator set out the expectations around meeting communication needs and for households who are less likely to engage.
- 8.2 The covering letter was checked by the readers panel for the previous year's survey and no changes were made to this year's letter format.
- 8.3 Tenants had the option to complete the survey online or using the paper format. They were made aware of the survey through letter, email and text messages.
- 8.4 Tenants had the option to either complete the survey online or in paper form (66% were postal completions, 34% were completed online). They were made aware of the survey through letters, emails and text messages.
- 8.5 Specific measures were taken for households known to need a bespoke approach to ensure they were able to complete the survey if they wished to.
- 8.6 Large print versions were sent to 27 households which have requested written communication in this form. The response rate for these households was 27(with a 56% response rate). An additional 41 people were identified as having additional communication needs, with 22 completing the survey (54% response rate which is above average)
- 8.7 The survey was structured so that advocates that support households were automatically sent the survey to be able to assist the tenant to complete.
- 8.8 For tenants living in extra care accommodation or other supported living schemes - housing officers and support workers were given guidance on how to respond to queries.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 A data protection impact assessment was undertaken in 2023 to identify and address any data protection issues arising from carrying out the survey on the then newly introduced TSMs given the level of personal and sensitive data being collected and shared between the council and the research

organisation. This ensures that appropriate contractual and other arrangements are in place to protect data and share securely. No new issues were identified before the 2024 survey was carried out.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The TSM survey is a regulatory requirement. The main risk would be if we did not conduct this survey in line with the requirements and submit the data return within the deadlines.

Risk Detail in this column specific risks, under each of these headings)	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i>	None	
<i>Community Support</i>	None.	
<i>Timescales.</i> That we can meet the RSH data requirement to submit the TSM results.	The survey was conducted in good time to allow for supplementary actions to be taken if the data collected failed to meet the RSH requirements.	
<i>Project capacity</i> Staffing resource and structure is in place to conduct the TSM survey to ensure tenants are aware of the results and how they will be used.		
<i>Financial / VfM</i>	Procurement exercise was conducted to commission the survey and to ensure VFM	
<i>Legal</i>		
<i>Innovation</i>		
<i>Reputation</i> Not completing the TSM survey in line with the RSH requirements	Commissioned ARP research to conduct the survey on behalf of the council who an experienced provider to ensure the sample was representative and met	

	the requirements for the return to be valid.	
<i>Other</i>		

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 **Introduction**

Although Tenant satisfaction surveys have been in place for many years, the revised and mandatory approach to conducting the annual surveys is in the second year.

This report presents the results of the annual TSM survey and offers some comparison to the results of the TSM survey for 2022/23 along with ARP benchmarked results from other providers carried out within 18 months.

The survey response rate was 45% (with an error margin +/- 2.9%). Overall satisfaction was 76%, a drop in 2% compared to the previous year results. An Overall satisfaction across the housing sector was 69% for national benchmark figure in 2023/24.

The results will be submitted to the regulator. A copy of the full report is provided in Appendix 1.

11.2 **Summary of Results**

The results across most of the TSMs are in line with the average median benchmark against other social housing landlords that have completed TSMs over the last 18 months.

A positive result this year has been the increase in satisfaction for the handling of anti-social behaviour which has risen from 48% to 55% in this year's results. This was identified as an area of improvement following the previous TSM results and shows a significant improvement in satisfaction.

Handling of complaints has seen a significant drop from 47% satisfied to 34% in this year's results. Although on par with the national average this is a 13% reduction and the biggest change across all TSM results.

Satisfaction with communal cleaning maintenance is lower than the benchmarked average. Communal cleaning service applies to 6% of homes in our stock.

A key change in this year's survey results compared to the previous year is the reduction in satisfaction with repairs over the last 12 months to 76% (a reduction of 4%) and time taken to complete repairs has reduced to 72% (reduction of 6%). However, both scores remain above the median of benchmarked results.

Key drivers have been identified by ARP which are likely to predict the overall satisfaction score. These are:

- Repairs service in last 12 months
- Provide a home that is well maintained
- Listen and act on Tenants' views
- Provide a home that is safe

11.3 **Headline Results**

The percentage of respondents that were **satisfied** for each measure is detailed below:

That their home is well maintained	73%
That communal areas are clean and maintained	61%
With the time taken to complete their last repair	72%
That the council listens to views and acts on them	61%
That they were being kept informed	71%
Were treated fairly and with respect	77%
With the approach to handling complaints	34%
That a positive contribution is made to the area	60%
With the approach to handling anti-social behaviour	55%

11.4 **Comments on results**

- a) The council's results are above Housemark (independent benchmarked data provider) benchmark median for 9 of the 12 indicators and at benchmark for one indicator.
- b) Satisfaction is much higher in sheltered/extra care compared to general needs housing.
- c) There continues to be a difference in satisfaction scores by age group with working age tenants 15% less satisfied than retired tenants (71% v 86%).

- d) Sheltered/extra care tenants satisfaction scores have reduced for property maintenance questions and for how safe they feel their home is compared to general needs tenants.
- e) Communication is an area where satisfaction levels have significantly reduced on questions such as whether a landlord listens to their views and acts upon them and how easy housing services is to deal with.
- f) Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas has reduced with a score below the benchmark median.
- g) 42% of respondents made additional comments, 32% of these being positive. The next highest theme was property improvements with heating and energy efficiency and damp, mould and condensation highest. Communal areas and facilities and communication also featured as themes with additional comments.

11.5 **Response to TSM scores below benchmark**

Complaints handling is at benchmark level at 34% which is a 13% reduction in satisfaction since last year. It is suggested that 23% of customers have complained but this may be an escalated service request rather than use of the formal complaints process. The percentage of customers who complained is below the benchmark level of 26%. Since April 2024 staff have received training in relation to the new complaints handling code. In Qu2 0.8% of customers made a formal complaint but that reduced to 0.5% at the end of Qu3.

Anti-social behaviour satisfaction has increased to 55% just 2% under the benchmark median. This was an area identified for improvement at the last TSM survey. The service has been working with an independent expert organisation to review the service as well as reviewing customer journey to improve efficiency and communication with customers. Satisfaction with a positive contribution to neighbourhood is linked to the ASB indicator. The former indicator is 3% below median benchmark.

Satisfaction with communal areas being clean and maintained is 5% below median benchmark and a drop of 3% from last year. The results showed that 36% of customers thought they lived in a home with a communal area. A review of the cleaning contract will be undertaken in the next six months to understand customer satisfaction and identify the improvements required.

12 **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 12.1 Undertaking an annual tenant satisfaction survey is a regulatory requirement and as such there is no other option available.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3429(H) Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSS) Results report

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey results 2024