

# **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 10 November 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr David Stallan**

**Subject: Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report 2015**

**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Housing (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)**

---



## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- 1) That the headline findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report 2015, set out in the Executive Summary attached as an Appendix, be noted; and**
- 2) That the Housing Select Committee provides any comments on the findings to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities.**

## **Report:**

1. The Council's Communities Directorate has been a member of Housemark, a national housing benchmarking club, for many years. Housemark has a standard Tenant Satisfaction Survey, called STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents), for its members to use to measure tenant satisfaction.
2. The Council commissioned an independent research company called ARP Research to carry out the STAR survey on its behalf. The survey conformed to the HouseMark STAR methodology, enabling the Council to benchmark against other landlords. The results were also compared against those from the last survey conducted in 2012.
3. These comparisons are available in the full-length report. The full report is also available to Members, but has not been printed with the agenda due to its length (66 pages). It is available to download from the Council's Committee Management System.

## **Survey Methodology:**

### *Fieldwork*

4. The survey took place between July and August 2015. ARP sent an anonymous postal self-completion questionnaire to a random sample of a third of our tenants (2,215), including both general needs and sheltered housing tenants. This was followed by a reminder questionnaire being sent to every non respondent.

### *Response rates and accuracy*

5. A free prize draw was used to encourage response. A questionnaire was drawn at random from those returned and the winner received £200 high street shopping vouchers.

6. In total 798 tenants took part in the survey, which represented a 36% response rate. This figure is in line with response rates achieved by many other councils and is well in excess of the STAR target.

### *Sampling*

7. Both ARP Research and HouseMark recommend that surveys of less than 10,000 in population (like the Council) should achieve a sampling error of at least +/- 4% at the 95% confidence level. This means that, for example, if 35% of tenants answered “yes” to a question, there are 95 chances out of 100 that the correct figure for all tenants (including those who did not respond) would be between 31% and 39% (i.e. 4% above or below 35%).

8. Due to the good response rate, the accuracy was even better than planned, and is to within +/- 2.8% at the 95% confidence interval. This included a response rate of 33% amongst general needs tenants (615, error margin +/- 3.7) and 52% for sheltered housing (183, error margin +/-6.7), with the overall response rate for the former exceeding the stipulated STAR target error margin.

### *Weighting*

9. In order to make sure the sample was representative of the overall profile of tenants it was necessary to weight the data by age category.

### *Presentation of the findings in the full report*

10. The full report presents the findings of the survey for both general needs and sheltered housing tenants. The report focuses on the key findings of the survey and the results are analysed by:

- Tenure
- Age of tenant
- Gender of tenant
- Area
- Property type
- Number of bedrooms
- Comparison with previous surveys, and
- Comparison with the results from other landlords

### *Overall tenant satisfaction and comparison with other landlords*

11. Since the Executive Summary is attached, the findings are not summarised further in this report. However, it is worth reporting here the comments on overall level of tenant satisfaction (which is the main comparator that is reported and used to compare with other landlords). According to the full report produced by ARP Research:

“ Overall the resident satisfaction survey results in 2015 were broadly similar in comparison to the last STAR survey, with satisfaction scores only varying by one or two percentage points on the majority of core questions compared to 2012. Furthermore, for those areas where benchmark information is available the vast majority of results were generally at or above average when compared with other landlords”.

12. The core STAR questions are benchmarked against the HouseMark STAR database, with the benchmarking group being selected by the Council from councils and housing associations nationwide who had completed a STAR survey in the last year. For the overall satisfaction score this included 64 organisations. HouseMark benchmark scores are supplemented for the remaining questions with benchmark data from ARP Research clients who have carried out surveys in the last 3 years using the STAR questionnaire. The group selection has been verified against the core HouseMark data to ensure that both benchmark

groups are closely matched on their scores across the core questions. This supplementary group includes 13 organisations.

13. Members are asked to note these findings and provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities accordingly.

**Reason for decision:**

Although there is no longer a requirement to undertake Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, it is considered important for Members and Officers to understand the views of tenants, and to gauge their levels of satisfaction on a periodic basis.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Consideration was given whether to include questions relating to equality and diversity. It was decided not to include the full set of questions as this information was collated during the 2013 Tenant Census.

**Consultation undertaken:**

A consultation exercise with relevant officers was undertaken in June to ensure the survey questions covered important issues. The resulting survey comprised of 29 approved questions, including the 7 core STAR questions.

Housing managers were asked to provide details of any vulnerable tenants. These were excluded from the sample.

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be consulted on the STAR report at their next meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November. Their comments will be reported in the subsequent report to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: Cost of approximately £8,000 met from the Housing Revenue Account

Personnel: Within existing officer time

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A