

17 July 2013		ITEM: 7
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
HOUSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION REPORT		
Report of: Dermot Moloney, Business Improvement Manager		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Accountable Head of Service: Richard Parkin, Head of Housing and Kathryn Adedeji, Head of Housing - Investment and Development		
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing		
This report is public		
Purpose of Report: To introduce tenants led performance indicators and give an overview update on Thurrock Council Housing Directorate current and future appraisal of customer satisfaction.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the last Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12th June 2013 there was a request that Housing work with the resident's panel to develop some resident friendly performance measures.

As part of developing an accountable, transparent, and open service, the Housing Performance team is currently initiating with the Tenants Customer Care group the process of developing rigorous and representative tenants' led performance indicators; so to give the latter an effective examining overview and scrutiny measure of the service.

The Housing Directorate uses resident feedback to maintain our commitment to service excellence. The feedback we get provides insights into how housing services are being delivered and assists in understanding the changing needs and expectations of our residents.

This report provides a summary of Housing Directorates' approach to measuring customer satisfaction with services provided through use of residents led measurements and surveys. It includes measures currently implemented to understand levels of customer satisfaction with services. In this context it seems useful to start showing the satisfaction statistics that we have begun to collect.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 That the committee note the contents of the report.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 In the last year the Housing Directorate began a process of transformation in which openness, transparency, customer engagement and putting customers first are recognised as core essential pillars in the directorate transformation.
- 2.2 A comprehensive re-thinking of tenant engagement is undergoing currently; it is envisaged that surveying customer satisfaction will form an essential part and a solid basis for service improvement.
- 2.3 It recognises the need to provide tenants and leaseholders with resident led indicators that offer a reflection of the directorate performance from their perspective.
- 2.4 It also appreciates the need for establishing dialogue which leads to setting up a comprehensive framework to evaluate residents and service user's level of satisfaction with services provided.

Residents led performance indicators:

- 2.5 A robust new performance monitoring framework at the directorate level is currently in place to monitor service improvement and delivery.
- 2.6 This framework takes into consideration council wide strategic priorities, operational performance, and customer satisfaction with the services provided. To build on this, we need to give our residents a clear view on performance through meaningful indicators that reflect their priorities.
- 2.7 Such indicators will endeavour to give tenants an appropriate and adequate overview of the service in general, and will be forwarded and communicated in simple terms avoiding jargon, taking into account the relevant audience.
- 2.8 An emphasis is placed on ensuring that such potential performance indicators are tenant led. They will form, with the newly formed directorate performance indicators, a complementary part that will provide both an objective and subjective view of service delivery and performance.
- 2.9 Housing has directly liaised with the Tenants Customer Care group regarding the process of seeking residents' views on customer satisfaction; this included discussing and agreeing on survey style, methodology, frequency and reporting on data.
- 2.10 Housing is currently in the process of assisting the Tenants Customer Care group to identify an appropriate set of residents led performance indicators. The outcomes of these discussions will be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel once agreed.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

2.11 Housing aim to evaluate customers' views on services provided; this process is outlined in five surveys:

- Satisfaction with repairs services.
- Tenants' general satisfaction with services provided.
- New tenants satisfaction with services provided.
- Tenants' satisfaction with capital programme work.
- Satisfaction with responses to Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) issues.

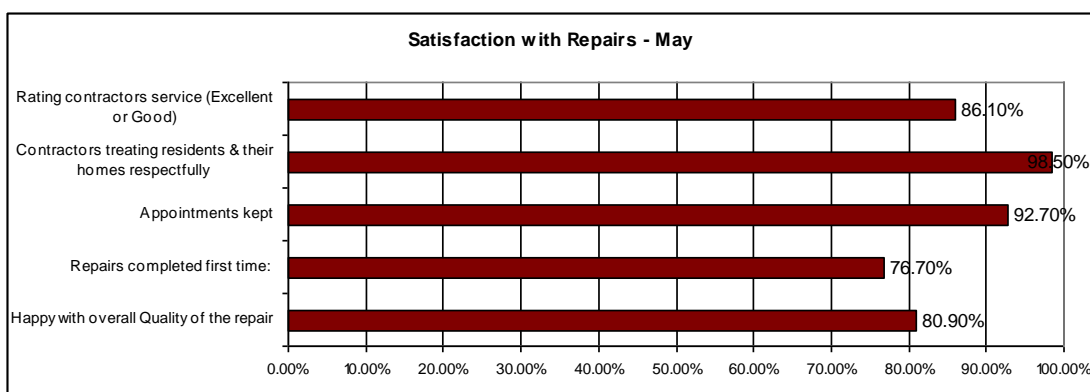
Repairs Survey

2.12 Currently tenants' satisfaction with repairs services is surveyed on monthly basis.

2.13 This survey is currently carried out by an independent company specialising in carrying out surveys so to ensure transparency, objectivity, consistency and provide a high level of confidence in the data collected.

2.14 On average a range of 150 to 300 tenants who have repair works carried out are contacted each month and their views on the repairs process and quality of work is sought.

2.15 The table below indicates tenants' satisfaction with repairs services in the month of May (most recent available data – May 2013).

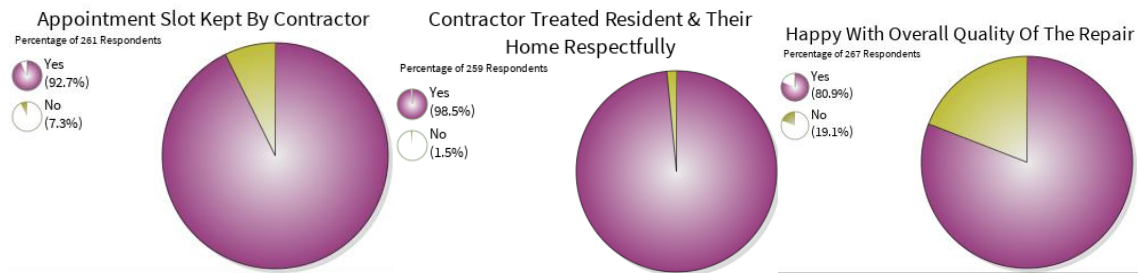


2.16 Overall satisfaction with repairs services has significantly improved in the last three months. In May 86.1% of service users rated the contractors service as excellent or good, this is 10.1% higher than residents satisfaction in January which was at 76% (when the former responsive repairs contract came to an end).

2.17 The overwhelming majority of tenants (98.5%) indicated in May’s survey that the contractor has treated them and their homes respectfully; this is an improvement from January 2013 when it was 93%.

2.18 Over 80% of tenants are happy with the overall quality of the repair job carried.

2.19 Finally, 6% of tenants considered the service repairs to be poor or terrible.



Charts above – Customer Satisfaction with repairs services

General Customer Satisfaction Survey

2.20 A pilot tenants’ general level of satisfaction survey was recently set up with the aim to sample 5% of current tenants’ views (sample of 500 tenants) and use it as a path finder for other surveys of residents’ satisfaction.

2.21 This pilot aims to scope a comprehensive tenant’s level of satisfaction and identify gaps in the service. The pilot began in June and took 4 weeks to complete (ending on 26 June 2013).

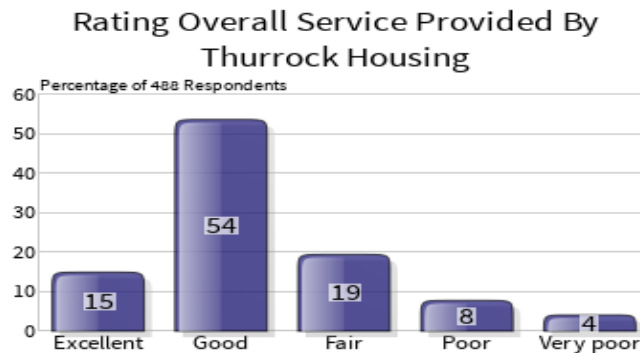
2.22 The pilot survey, again conducted independently, examines:

- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with the quality of their homes.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with how Estate Officers deal with enquires received.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with how Housing is listening to the former views and act upon them.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with how Housing is keeping tenants informed.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with Horticultural services provided by Housing.
- ✓ Tenant’s satisfaction with care taking services where applicable.
- ✓ Thurrock Council housing as a recommended housing option.

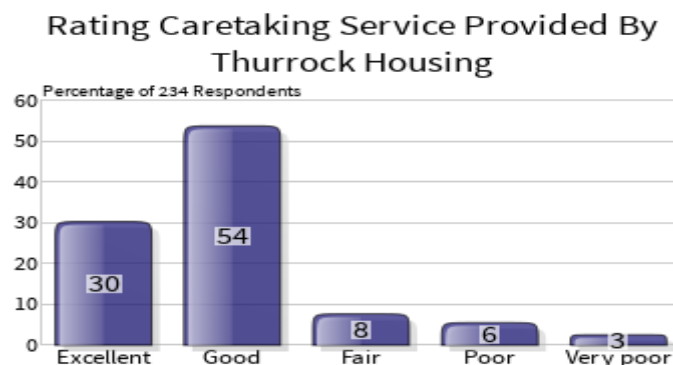
- ✓ Seeking tenant's views on what constitute as a priority.
- ✓ Seeking tenants' views on further involvement in improving our services.
- ✓ Tenant's overall satisfaction with services provided by Housing

2.23 A detailed breakdown of the results for each area above will be prepared. As a sample below are the results of three of the main questions.

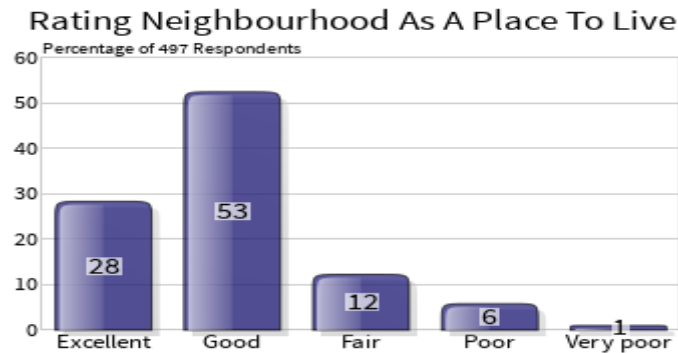
2.24 The overall rating of Thurrock Council housing services indicates that 69% of tenants consider the services provided to be excellent or good, whilst 12% of tenants rate it poor or very poor.



2.25 The overwhelming majority of tenants (84%) rate caretaking services (where applicable) as excellent or good, and 9% of tenants consider the service to be poor or very poor.



2.26 Also 81% of tenants' rate their neighbourhood as an excellent or good place to live and 7% view it as a poor or very poor place to live.



- 2.27 Estate Officers will make contact with all surveyed residents who indicated that they are not overall satisfied with Housing services to capture and understand the reasons for dissatisfaction.
- 2.28 Following the end of the pilot the Housing Performance team will analyse and evaluate the merits and value of this path finder survey in the coming weeks. If deemed appropriate we will proceed to implement the next phases of customer satisfaction surveys in due course (see 4.1).
- 2.29 It is intended that the surveys will be a mixture of monthly and quarterly campaigns with relevant analysis being reported back to service managers and senior officers within the directorate.

New Tenants Satisfaction

- 2.30 Housing also plans to seek the views of new and potential tenants, whereby all new tenants are contacted to appraise their experience of becoming Thurrock Council tenants.
- 2.31 The survey will cover the registration process, handling initial requests, bidding and their experience with Housing services prior to signing up for a tenancy (e.g. the pre-allocation process and potential time spent in a temporary accommodation). It will also cover the viewing, tenancy sign up and initial settling in period experience.

Tenants Satisfaction with the Capital Programme

- 2.32 Thurrock Council is undertaking a large homes transformation program which will run over a period of five years, starting from July 2013.
- 2.33 Thus, it is anticipated that the views of all tenants whereby their properties receives such home improvements will be sought in an independent and specially designed survey to fully appreciate tenants' perspectives.

Satisfaction with response to ASB issues

- 2.34 Creating safer communities demands appropriate understanding of its residents feel about it. Therefore, it is likely that a further detailed survey will

be put in place to assess and respond to issues relating to the handling of Anti Social Behaviour complaints.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Report intended to update members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 Not applicable

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 This new approach aims to be responsive and reflective to Thurrock Council tenants and reflective to their needs and aspirations.

- 6.2 At its core it seeks to build pride among tenants with their Housing services, along with responsibility and respect on part of the latter, create safer communities by identifying and addressing gaps in the service, with the ultimate effort to pursue safer, cleaner, and greener homes and neighbourhoods.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Telephone and email: **mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk**
01375 652772

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation of this report

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart**
Telephone and email: **01375 652 040**
alison.stuart@bdlegal.org.uk

The report is for noting and there are no legal implications at this time.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

No Diversity implication arising from this report

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- None

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