

19 January 2021		ITEM: 5
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results and Initial Action Plan		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Chris Seman – Intelligence and Performance Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health.		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

An overview of the results of the tenant satisfaction survey results is provided in addition to a summary overview of the actions which have been identified so far from the results of the survey. The results and action plan for the leasehold version of the survey will be brought to the committee in March 2021.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Starting at the end of July 2020 and ending at the beginning of October 2020, a full postal tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by our service provider, KWEST Research Ltd, which was sent to every tenant. The project used a multi-mode approach, comprising a postal census survey targeting all of the Council's tenant households, accompanied by email invitations and an online version to broaden survey reach and accessibility.

2.2 The questionnaire was designed in accordance with HouseMark's STAR guidance and includes a selection of STAR questions, alongside additional question-sets that cover specific areas of interest to the Council.

2.3 At the end of the data collection period a total of 2,560 tenant responses had been received representing a response rate of 26%. 18% of responses were completed online with the remainder returned by post. 2,560 responses provides excellent overall data accuracy of $\pm 1.7\%$ for the overall tenant results, allowing findings to be used with confidence. An accuracy level of $\pm 1.7\%$ means that if 50% of respondents answer "yes" to a yes/no question,

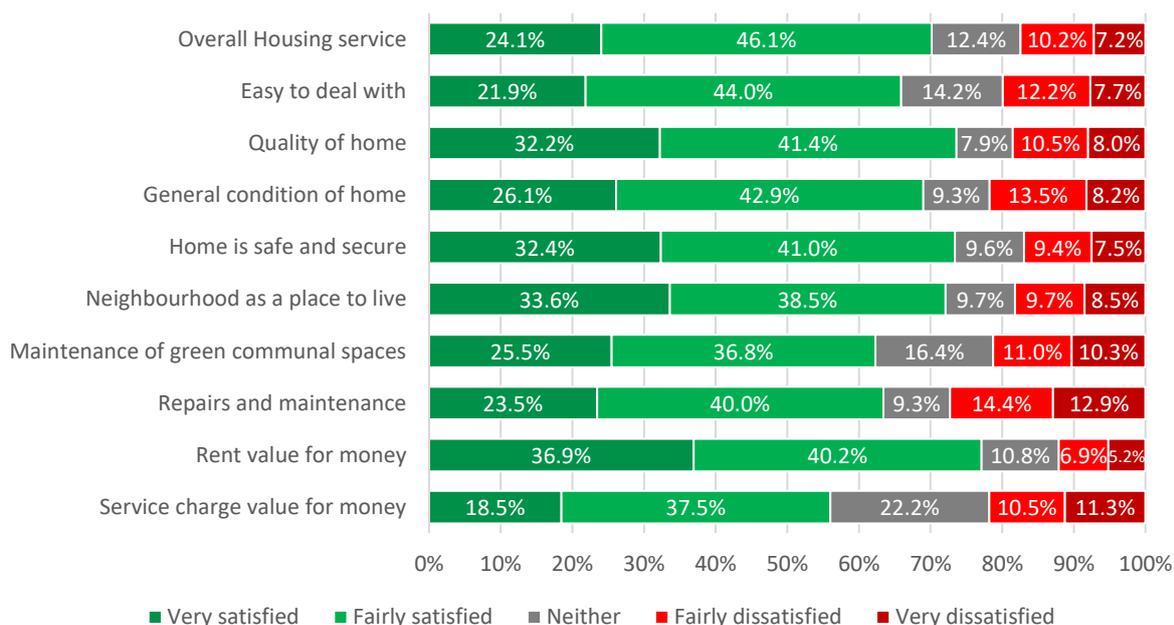
then we know that between 48.3% and 51.7% of all households would give the same response, including those who did not complete a survey questionnaire.

3. Results

3.1 As part of the survey, a series of satisfaction questions were included to ascertain tenants' views of the key service areas provided by Housing. It is important to note that the bulk of responses were received between August and September 2020, not long after the coronavirus lockdown which resulted in a reduction in services provided by the Council.

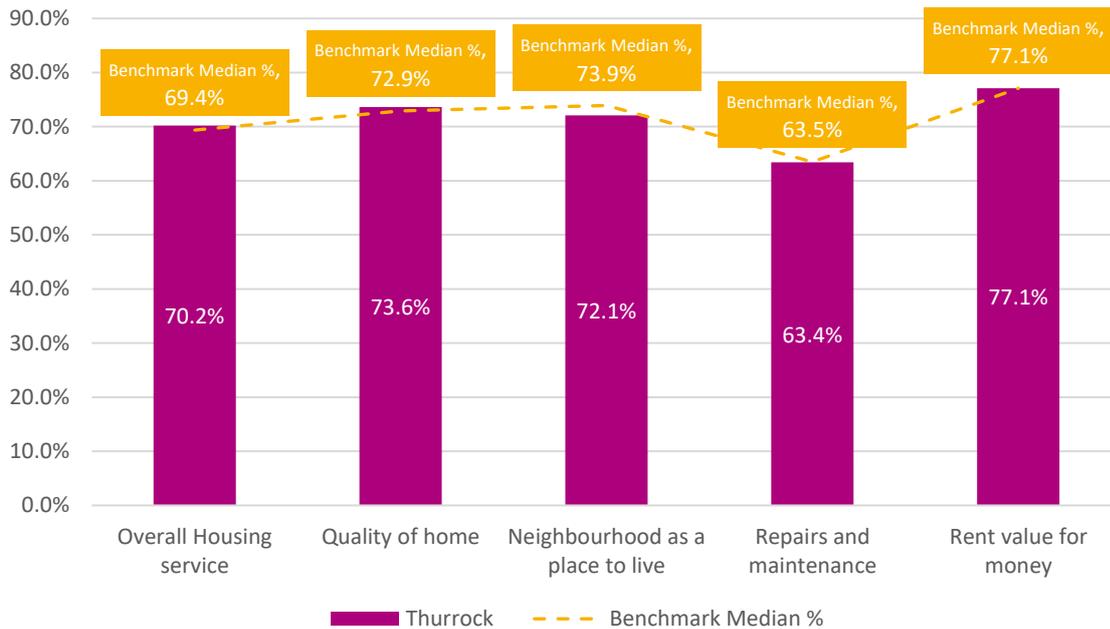
The survey results provide confirmation that the homes and services provided by the Council are meeting the needs of the majority of residents. This is demonstrated by high proportions of residents expressing satisfaction with many key service areas including rent value for money, quality of home, home is safe and secure, neighbourhoods as a place to live and the overall Housing service.

Satisfaction with Housing and services



Through Housemark, we are able to benchmark Thurrock's results against other comparable local authorities and ALMOs on the five core questions which are part of this section. The organisations within Thurrock's regional peer group include 40 organisations in Thurrock's geographical vicinity including Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham and Redbridge amongst 33 others. The below chart shows how Thurrock's results compare with this peer group.

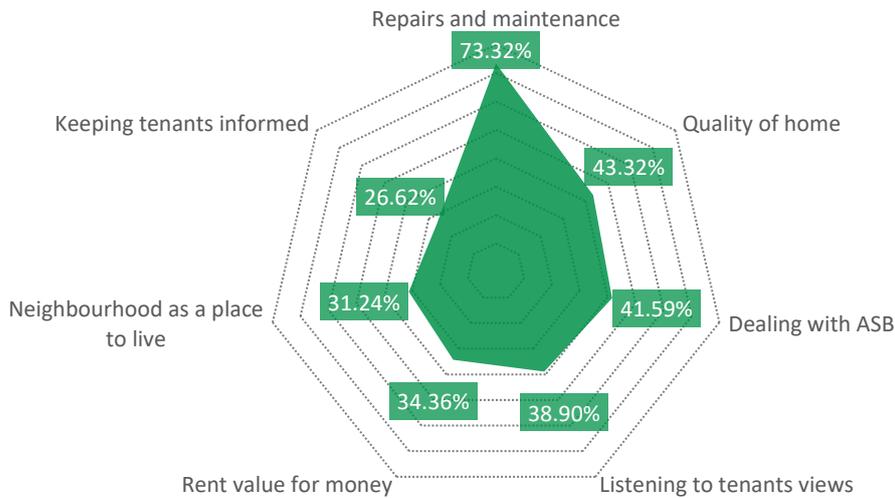
Core Questions - Benchmark Comparisons



The benchmarking results demonstrate that the Housing service is performing well across all core questions with satisfaction with the overall Housing service and quality of home exceeding the benchmark median, satisfaction with rent value for money equal to the benchmark median and satisfaction with repairs and maintenance and neighbourhood as a place to live slightly below the benchmark median.

- 3.2 An important objective when undertaking the survey was to obtain tenant feedback on the most important services delivered by the Council. When asked to identify which services were their top priority, residents' responses align with the top priorities reported by tenants in research throughout the social housing sector.

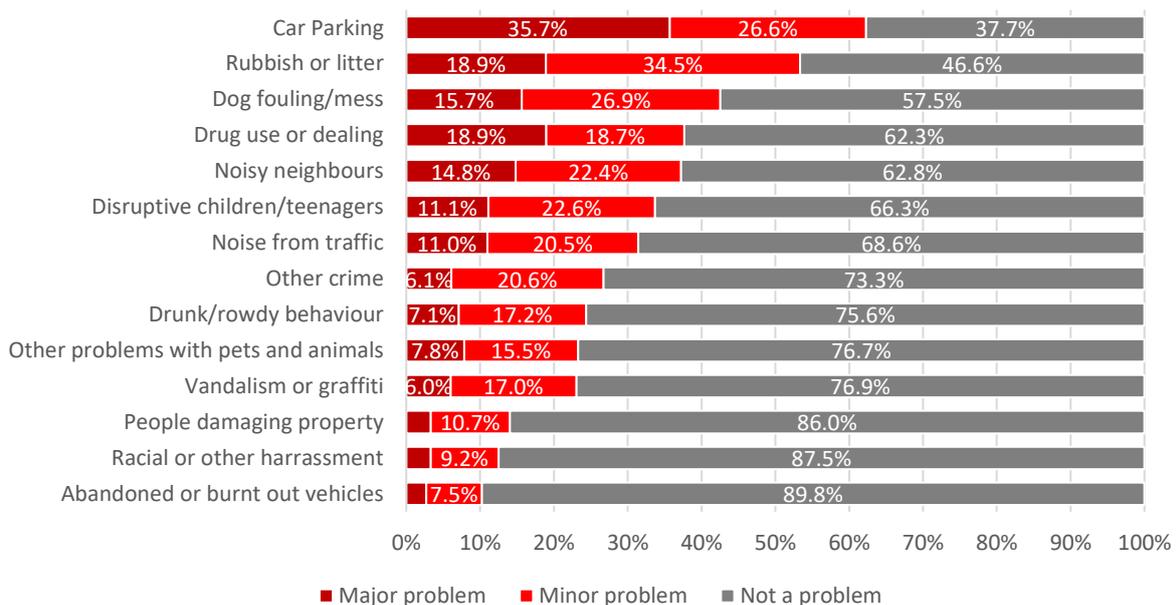
Tenant Service Priorities



The results from this question confirms that repairs and maintenance is the highest priority for tenants by a wide margin with 73.32% of tenants indicating this was one of their priorities, followed by quality of home at 43.32% and dealing with ASB at 41.59%.

3.3 The survey also asked residents about problems in their area which can have an impact on tenant’s perception of their neighbourhood as a place to live. Tenants were asked to indicate whether each problem in a list was a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem. Full details of the borough wide neighbourhood problems is shown in the chart below.

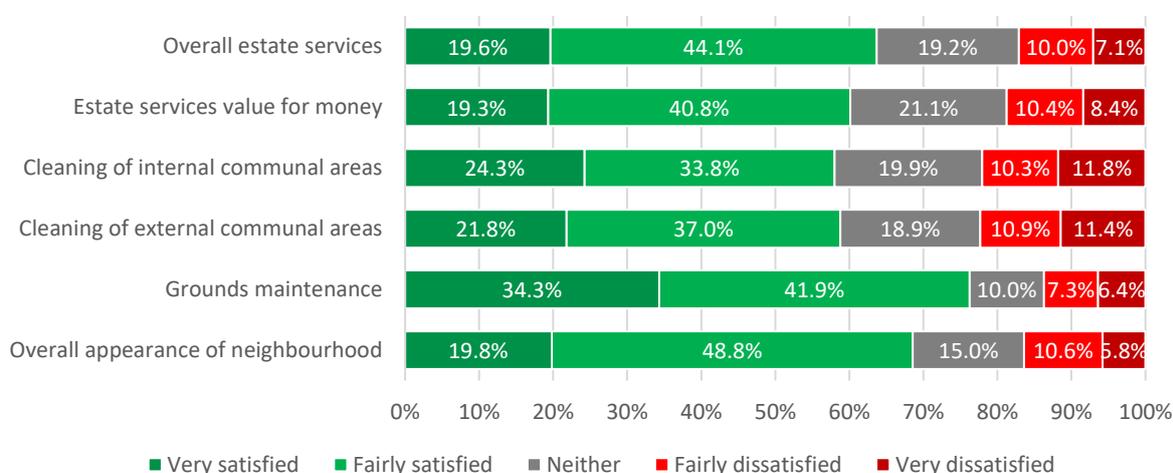
Neighbourhood Problems



The most common neighbourhood problems indicated by tenants as part of the survey are car parking, rubbish and litter and dog fouling and mess. The resulting data from this question enables us to identify specific neighbourhood problems down to area, neighbourhood or even street level.

3.4 Another section of the survey asked tenants to feed back their views on the estate services function of Housing. Tenants were asked to indicate their satisfaction levels with six measures, the results of which are shown in the chart below.

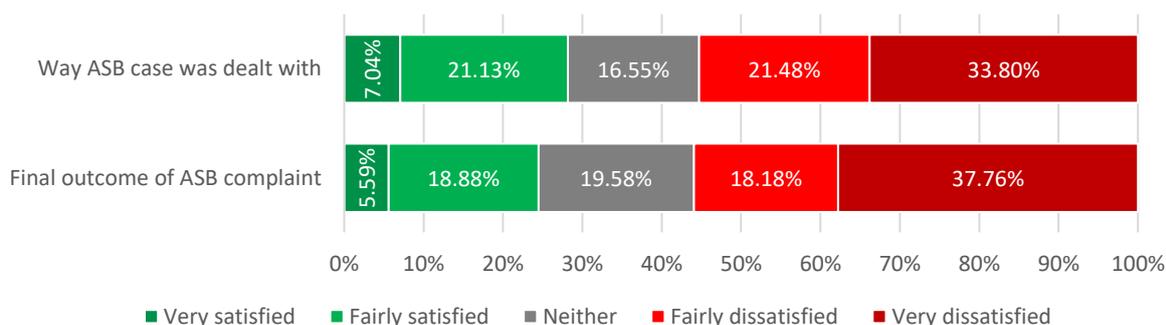
Satisfaction with estate services



The results show high levels of satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service and moderate levels of satisfaction with all other measures.

3.5 Tenants were asked to indicate whether they had reported an anti-social behaviour issue in the last 12 months and to provide their feedback on their experience if they had. Overall, 12% of tenants who responded to the survey said they have reported anti-social behaviour to Housing in the last year. The results for this section are shown in the chart below.

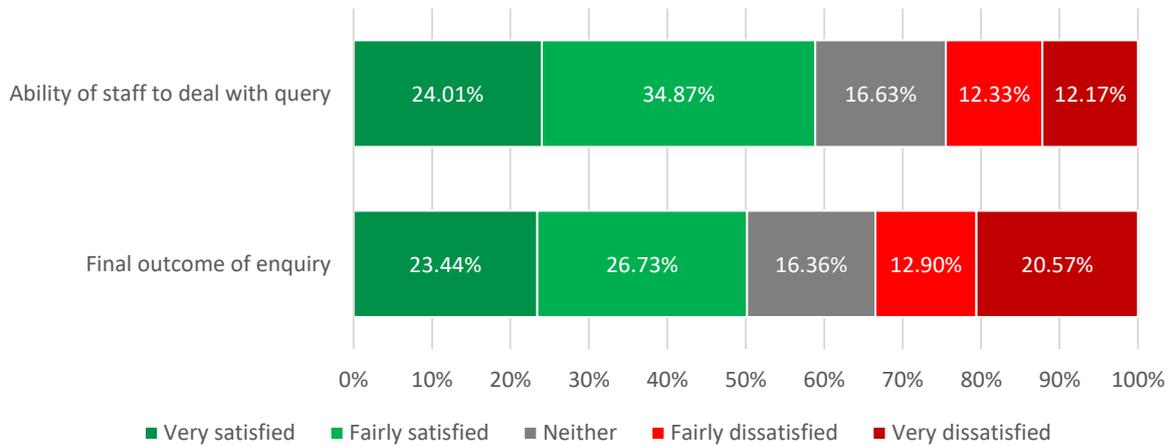
Satisfaction with ASB case handling



Tenants' responses to this question show low levels of satisfaction amongst the cohort of tenants who have reported anti-social behaviour in the last year with the way their case was dealt with and the final outcome of their complaint. As part of this section of the survey, 41% of tenants indicated that they found it difficult to report their ASB complaint and 62% of tenants indicated that they would be willing to report ASB issues in the future.

3.6 Similarly, tenants were also asked to indicate whether they had contacted the Housing department in the last 12 months and to provide feedback on their experience if they had. 50.7% of respondents indicated that they had contacted the Housing department in the last year. The results from this section are shown in the charts below.

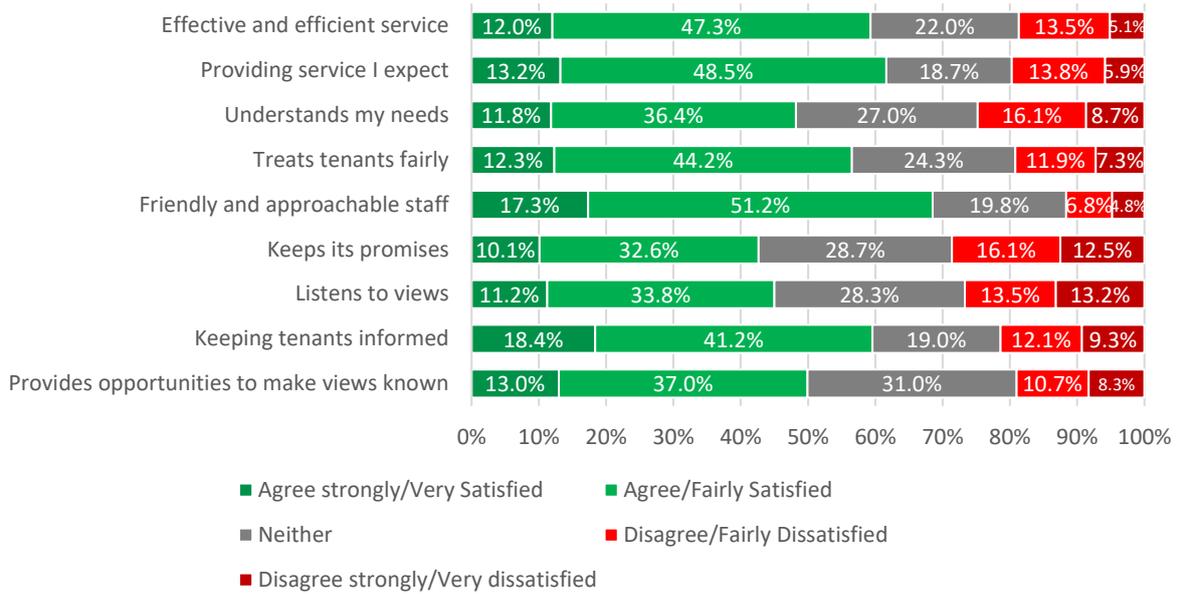
Contact and communications



The results from this section of the survey show moderate tenant satisfaction levels with the ability of staff to deal with enquiries and with the final outcome of the enquiries. 63% of tenants said that their query was answered in a reasonable timescale and 63% of tenants found the staff member they contacted helpful. However 39% of tenants said that they found it difficult to get in contact with the right person within the Housing service.

3.7 The survey also contained a list of landlord characteristics from Housemark's STAR question library. Tenants were asked to either indicate whether they agree or disagree with the measures included in the survey. The results of this section is shown in the chart below.

Satisfaction with landlord characteristics



The results from this section show moderate levels of tenant satisfaction with the majority of measures with large proportions of tenants giving the neutral rating of “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”. The measures with the lowest ratings overall were keeps its promises, listens to views and understands my needs.

4. Initial actions identified

4.1 The Housing management team have reviewed and discussed the results and initial analysis of the data which has identified some initial actions to address some of the dissatisfaction expressed by tenants. This is an ongoing process and will evolve based on the results of further data analytics and intelligence and will be built on further over the coming months.

4.2 Satisfaction with Housing and services

Whilst the Housing service has performed well in comparison to its benchmarking peers and a high proportion of tenants expressed satisfaction with the majority of measures in this section, there was still a level of dissatisfaction amongst respondents across all measures. A small amount of free text feedback was collected as part of the survey but this was not specific to each measure which does not allow us to identify the exact reasons for dissatisfaction with each measure.

As part of the ongoing programme of monthly telephone satisfaction surveys, free text feedback is collected from respondents for the majority of measures shown in this section when respondents give a “fairly dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied rating”. An action has been identified to carry out a full analysis of this free text feedback we have collected during the year to date to identify the key issues for tenants which are driving dissatisfaction with each measure to further inform the action plan.

4.3 Neighbourhood Problems

The resulting data from this section enables us to pinpoint the neighbourhood issues in granular detail down to street or post code level and allow us to determine where certain neighbourhood problems may be more prevalent than others. An action has been identified to aggregate this data into the most appropriate level of granularity to be shared with neighbourhoods team, the tenancy management team, the estates services team and the anti-social behaviour team for discussion and to develop specific action plans for areas or neighbourhoods where it is necessary to do so.

Due to the fact that car parking has been identified as the most prevalent neighbourhood problem, an action has been identified to explore options in relation to introducing parking permit areas based on the data as well as exploring options in relation to increasing car parking spaces where possible.

4.4 Estate Services

Data analytics will be key to developing an action plan for estate services. An action has been identified to complete a location based analysis of the estate services responses to determine whether satisfaction with all measures differs between areas and sites to enable the service to pinpoint areas of high dissatisfaction and conduct an investigation to determine the reasons for dissatisfaction.

Another action has been identified to overlay the postal survey data with the data from the ongoing programme of monthly telephone satisfaction survey to determine the most common reasons for dissatisfaction with estates services through free text analysis.

4.5 Anti-social behaviour and contact and communication

In relation to anti-social behaviour, an action has been identified to explore the possibility of mystery shopping in order to identify areas and touchpoints during the process of reporting an anti-social behaviour complaint which could be improved to enhance tenants' experience during the entire process. This will further inform the action plan through the identification of specific actions.

For contact and communication, a number of actions have been identified. The Housing service aims to introduce cross-divisional working to ensure staff are able to answer tenant's queries even if the tenants query relates to another service area. This will be completed through the development of an internal directory to enable staff to find the information they require as well as enhancements to Housings web page on the Council's website.

Another action which has been identified to improve contact and communication is to deliver training to customer facing staff in the skills required to communicate with tenants effectively as well as including this

subject as part of new staff inductions.

A further and more wide ranging action has also been identified which will cut across both anti-social behaviour and contact. The Housing service will look to establish a wider project to identify issues in resident interaction across all Housing services with a view to improving and reducing customer effort to raise queries or issues and have them resolved.

4.6 Landlord characteristics

In order to understand dissatisfaction with the measures included within this section, the Housing service will look to deliver focus groups with tenants to explore the reasons for dissatisfaction in relation to each individual measure. This will enable the service to understand tenants' issues on each subject and what tenants feel the service needs to do to address their issues to further inform the action plan. The delivery of focus groups will also demonstrate the services willingness to listen to tenants' views and develop a better understanding of tenants needs.

In addition to this, the Housing service will also look to ascertain whether there are links or correlations between tenant's responses to the landlord characteristics questions to establish whether service delivery in certain areas have an impact on tenants views on landlord characteristic measures through data analysis.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The committee's comments are sought on the results of the full postal tenant satisfaction survey.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 6.1 None.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 None.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Hannah Katakwe**
Housing Accountant, Finance and IT

None.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Given the nature of this update report, there are no legal implications directly arising from it.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no direct equality and diversity implications within this report. Tenant satisfaction monitoring will allow the Housing service to listen to tenant's views and build a far better understanding of tenant's needs including any issues around accessibility or any other negative impact on those with a protected characteristic.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder.

Not applicable

9. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

10. **Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author:

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Intelligence and Performance Manager