



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 1 MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: TENANT SURVEY 2015

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Communities Committee with a progress update on the 2015 Tenant Survey.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (15) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to performance management for Housing Services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:

- (i) **notes progress achieved in relation to the 2015 Tenant Survey; and**
- (ii) **agrees that a further report containing a detailed analysis on the final survey findings and an improvement plan will be presented to this Committee on 21 June 2016.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has carried out a number of independent surveys to gather tenants' views on Housing Services. The feedback gathered from tenants has an important role in identifying how the Council is performing in its landlord role and for prioritising service improvements.
- 3.2 Social landlords are required to report on tenant satisfaction as part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Council's last Tenant Survey was completed in 2012 and the SHR expects landlords to carry out a survey of tenants at least once every 3 years.
- 3.3 On 12 February 2015, the Council approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget which included a provision for the 2015 Tenant Survey (paragraph 6(v) of the Minute refers). The completion of the Tenant Survey is a key action of the 2015/16 Housing and Property Service Improvement Plan.

Progress on the implementation of the plan was reported to the Communities Committee on 8 December 2015 (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers).

4. DESIGN

- 4.1 Following a competitive tender process, the Housing Service commissioned Craigforth to carry out the 2015 survey and produce a report on the results. Craigforth is an independent market research organisation with experience of working with social landlords on tenant surveys.
- 4.2 The survey aimed to assess tenants' views and experiences of the Housing Service, evaluate compliance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and allow comparison with previous baseline results. The questionnaire was based around the following themes:
- Views on landlord services;
 - Views on how the Council deals with enquiries or service requests;
 - Views on the quality of home and neighbourhood;
 - Views on rents and value for money; and
 - Views on communication and participation.
- 4.3 The design of the questionnaire was informed by a consultation with 200 Council tenants. A draft questionnaire was reviewed by the Moray Tenants Forum at their meeting on 25 August 2015 and tested by a random sample of tenants during September 2015. The feedback received indicated that the questionnaire was reasonable in length, easy to understand and simple to complete. Only a few minor changes to the format and design were requested by tenants.
- 4.4 Publicity was arranged to maximise responses and included promotion within local press, the Council's website, social media and on screens at Council access points.
- 4.5 The survey packs included a cover letter and offered several response options to tenants:
- By post, using an enclosed reply paid envelope;
 - Online, using a web link or smartphone QR code; or
 - By phone, using a Freephone number.

5. FIELDWORK

- 5.1 During late September 2015, Craigforth issued surveys to all of the Council's 5,890 tenants. A total of 1,738 responses (30% response rate) had been received when the survey closed on 6 November 2015. This is a similar response rate to the 2012 survey (31% response rate) and is typical for a survey of this type.
- 5.2 This is the first time all Council tenants were invited to give their views on the service. Previous tenant surveys have been based on a representative sample of between 2000-2500 tenants. The increased volume of returns is

important because it provides more reliable results. A larger sample also means sophisticated techniques can be applied to identify and prioritise aspects of the service that are most likely to have the strongest impact on overall satisfaction.

- 5.3 The consultant has noted that there are tenant groups which have under representation within the results, particularly younger tenants (aged under 35) and those who have taken up a council tenancy within the last five years. It is evident also that older tenants (aged over 65) are over represented.

6. **MAIN FINDINGS**

- 6.1 The survey was completed on 6 November 2015 and the main findings were presented by Craigforth to Elected Members at a briefing session on 20 January 2015.
- 6.2 Of the 7 main satisfaction indicators presented to the Council, the following results will be used in the 2015/16 Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator:

Indicator	Tenant Survey 2012	Tenant Survey 2015	Local Authority Average 2014/15
% of tenants satisfied with the overall service	88.6%	80%	83.4%
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	86.1%	78%	80.6%
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	73.2%	60%	69.7%
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	79.6%	86%	82.9%
% of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	82%	79%	87%
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	86.9%	76%	81.1%
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	78.1%	84%	76.4%

- 6.3 The draft report indicates an 80% satisfaction rate with the overall service provided by the Council. Less than 1 in 10 tenants (9%) were fairly or very dissatisfied.

- 6.4 The initial survey findings have been positive in several areas and show higher level of satisfaction than the 2012 survey, particularly for the following ARC indicators:
- % of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (86%).
 - % of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money (84%).
- 6.5 However, there are some ARC indicators for which satisfaction levels are lower than the previous survey and which require improvement action. These include:
- % of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (60%).
 - % of tenants who have had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the service (79%).
- 6.6 Officers will now consider these findings in more detail and present options to improve these indicators within the Improvement Action Plan.
- 6.7 The 2015 survey gave tenants the opportunity to suggest up to 3 improvements or changes to their home. There were 1005 tenants who responded to the question:

Suggestion	Number	% of those commenting
Heating and insulation	314	31%
Bathroom/shower	237	24%
Windows	236	24%
External repairs/improvements	186	19%
Kitchen	141	14%
Doors (internal and/or external)	107	11%
Other internal repairs/improvements	82	8%
Garden	30	3%

The Committee should note that home improvement priorities identified by tenants in the survey have informed the Housing Investment Programme for 2016/17. A report on the programme is included as a separate item on the Committee agenda.

7. **FUTURE ACTIONS**

- 7.1 The consultant has provided officers with a draft Tenant Survey report and a final report will be received prior to the invoice settlement which will be concluded by end of February 2016. It is intended to carry out further analysis of the data and present further findings to this Committee in June 2016.
- 7.2 The consultant will develop an "easy-to-read" summary of the main findings so that these can be issued to all tenants with the next scheduled mail shot. Details of the improvement action plan and future progress in implementing the plan will be included as articles in future editions of the Tenants' Voice

newsletter. The results will also be published on the Council's website and publicised using social media.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Moray 2023: A Plan for the Future/Service Plan

Moray 2023 identifies that customer engagement is a priority in the improvement of service quality. This is also reflected within the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

There is a requirement to carry out regular satisfaction surveys under the Scottish Housing Regulator's performance framework and to comply with the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes.

(c) Financial implications

The settlement, which is expected to be in the region of £15k, will be made before end of February 2016.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications associated with this report.

(g) Equalities

There are no equalities implications arising from this report. Any equalities implications arising from improvement actions to be developed as a result of the Tenant Survey will be considered when actions are proposed.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has been carried out with senior managers in the Housing and Property Service and the Committee Services Officer (Lissa Rowan) who agree with this report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report sets out the progress achieved to date in relation to the 2015 Tenant Survey. A further report containing a detailed analysis on the survey results will be presented to this Committee in June 2016.**

Author of Report: Daska Murray, Senior Housing Policy Officer
Background Papers:
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