

Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 17/04/2024
Subject: Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Survey Results	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 4 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
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Summary

At the January meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, Members received a report summarising the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey for 2023/24, which will form the basis of our first compulsory return to the Regulator for Social Housing.

This report provides further detail about the results, providing a breakdown of the responses to each question by level of satisfaction. Further information is also provided on the additional questions asked as part of the survey, including those relating to the cost of living.

The results of the survey are being used to inform decisions on service improvements, and many themes are reflected in the new Housing Strategy which is currently in development, and will be monitored in supporting action plans.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. With effect from April 2023, the Regulator for Social Housing has required social landlords to conduct tenant perception surveys and report the results annually. There are twelve tenant perception measures covering a range of landlord services. Further information on ten separate measures will also be submitted using data held by landlords. The deadline for the first submission is the end of June 2024.
2. The City Corporation's Tenant Satisfaction Survey was concluded in late 2023 and Members received a report in January 2024 with the headline results for each of the tenant perception measures.
3. The purpose of this report is to provide more detail about the breakdown of each result, as requested at Sub-Committee. Officers have now reviewed the results and the comments made by respondents to the survey (18% of current tenants). Some themes arising from the survey are included in this report.
4. The appendices to this report contain further information about each Tenant Perception Measure, as well as data relating to additional questions included in the survey.

Current Position

5. Performance for each Tenant Perception Measure is shown in **Appendix One**. Additional questions are also included in that Appendix, including questions on the ease of dealing with the City Corporation (69% satisfaction) and the service provided by the estate office (69% satisfaction).
6. The highest performing measures, with 70% or more satisfaction, are:

Identifier	Measure	Overall Satisfaction	Very Satisfied
TP05	Satisfaction that the home is safe	72%	40%
TP07	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	74%	37%
TP08	Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	71%	28%
TP10	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	74%	40%
TP11	Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	70%	34%

7. Members will also note that 40% of respondents are 'very satisfied' with the time taken to complete their most recent repair (TP03), with a total overall satisfaction figure of 66%. Dissatisfaction for this measure stands at 25%.
8. The lowest performing measures were:

Identifier	Measure	Overall Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied
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TP06	Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them	53%	21%
TP09	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	38%	32%

9. Complaints handling was the area in which most respondents were 'very dissatisfied', at 32%. This question is asked of respondents who have made a complaint within the previous twelve months, though 'complaint' is not restricted to formal complaints and will include informal matters raised with staff which are not investigated at Stage One of our procedure. It can therefore be interpreted as a wider 'customer service' question as well as one relating to the making of formal complaints.
10. One interesting result is TP08 (treating tenants with respect), where overall dissatisfaction stands at 12%, the lowest proportion of dissatisfaction for any of the twelve measures.
11. Other areas with relatively low overall dissatisfaction include TP07 (keeping tenants informed – 15%), TP10 (cleanliness of communal areas, 16%) and TP11 (positive contribution to neighbourhoods, 14%).
12. For some measures, a notable proportion of respondents answered that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied':

Identifier	Measure	Overall Satisfaction	'Neither'
TP08	Satisfaction that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	71%	17%
TP11	Satisfaction with the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	70%	16%

13. There are multiple potential reasons for people being neutral about a survey response. It could be because of the way in which the survey was conducted, or perhaps being unclear on what the question meant. For instance, in TP11, respondents may not have been certain about what was meant by 'positive contribution to neighbourhoods'. This question is designed to measure things which landlords are directly responsible for. Tenants living on smaller estates may have found this more difficult to answer than those living on larger estate with a range of amenities such as shops, play areas and community centres, who might more easily be able to see a positive contribution from us as their landlord.
14. If residents are unaware of what we are responsible for in their neighbourhood, they may find it difficult to say how satisfied they are with our contribution to the area. This could be addressed by improving communications to residents on certain subjects, making them more aware of our responsibilities and what we do, or might do, to contribute to their local community.

Additional Information

15. The 'cost of living' questions are shown in **Appendix One**. As previously highlighted, 70% of respondents stated that they did not currently struggle to pay rent or service charges, however 21% were either struggling or were worried about their future ability to pay.
16. A higher proportion of respondents were either struggling, or were worried about being able to pay, household bills (other than fuel), at 38%, and utilities bills (44%).
17. We provide free, independent help and advice on money matters through the City Advice service, which is available to residents living on all our estates. This is publicised through our newsletters and during contact with individual tenants, however a targeted campaign or mailshot may be a useful way of bringing available help to the attention of a greater number of tenants.
18. Another way of assisting tenants is to publicise schemes offered by utility providers, for instance the 'WaterHelp' initiative available from Thames Water, and making people aware of how to check and change tariffs for gas and electricity. Officers will incorporate these subjects into the communications being planned for the coming year.
19. Income Recovery Officers also signpost tenants for help and advice on debt and money advice issues, when discussing rent arrears. The availability of the City Advice service is also included in letters to tenants when addressing arrears, and promoted during face to face meetings.

Using the Results

20. The results of the survey are being used to identify areas in which service improvements can be made. Identified actions will be tracked in the Housing Service Plan, the latest version of which is currently being finalised. This will sit beneath the Housing Strategy, which is due to be presented to Community and Children's Services Committee in May 2024.
21. The results in some areas show a relationship with issues already observed by officers and Members, and actions are already being taken, or are planned, to address required service improvements:

TP02, TP03, TP04	Satisfaction with repairs, repairs timescales and maintenance of the home	Members are aware that a new responsive repairs contract is due to be procured and residents will be involved in this exercise. The new contract is intended to enable better performance and provide a more consistent service in line with tenant expectations. As we make progress on our current Major Works programme, satisfaction
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		<p>with the maintenance of estate should increase.</p> <p>An improvement plan is in place for the current contract and is being monitored by senior officers, with regular contract meetings with the supplier.</p> <p>The post of Head of Repairs & Maintenance for the HRA is currently being advertised and a permanent post-holder should be in place by July/August, depending on the candidate response.</p> <p>Further recruitment is taking place to bring the Repairs team back up to full strength.</p> <p>Repairs will be a prime focus of resident engagement, with the help of our new strategy, to amplify the tenant voice in decision-making and scrutiny (please see TP06).</p>
TP06:	Listening to, and acting upon, tenants' views	<p>A new resident engagement strategy is being created with the help of TPAS. Following resident engagement activity, this strategy is due to be finalised in May 2024 and will be brought to this Sub-Committee for approval.</p> <p>The strategy will result in new mechanisms for listening to the tenant voice, ensuring that this is acted upon, and tenants are aware of how their feedback influences service provision.</p>
TP09	Complaints handling	<p>Officers are already reviewing practice in this area and will complete a new Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's <i>Complaint Handling Code</i>. This will result in an improvement action plan.</p> <p>It is intended that complaint handling will be a key area for residents to scrutinise and there are opportunities</p>

		for further staff training and development in effectively handling complaints.
TP12	Landlord's handling of antisocial behaviour	<p>We are currently reviewing our work in this area and all relevant staff received training on effective ASB case management in March 2024.</p> <p>We are due to implement a new ASB case management system, E-CINS, which is used by other teams in the City Corporation, to enable better information sharing and performance monitoring.</p> <p>Community safety themes will likely be an area of focus under the new Resident Engagement Strategy, giving residents the opportunity to influence local decision-making on security and safety matters on their estates.</p>

22. Performance in other areas will be addressed through specific pieces of work, which should raise tenant awareness in these areas and have a positive impact on satisfaction. For instance, TP05 – Satisfaction that the Home is Safe; while it is encouraging that 72% of respondents were satisfied that their homes were safe, we would of course like a higher proportion of people to feel safe at home.
23. The Building Safety Act 2022 has introduced a range of obligations for landlords managing relevant residential buildings. A significant amount of work is underway within the Housing Division to ensure compliance with the new duties and meet the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator.
24. Part of this work includes a positive duty on landlords to engage with residents on building safety matters, informing people more clearly and regularly about building safety risks and having clear communications channels that suit residents' diverse needs. Once the new ways of working are embedded, residents will be more aware of the risks affecting their building and the measures we are taking to reduce or eliminate them. This greater awareness should result in a larger proportion of tenants being satisfied with safety in their homes, and being satisfied that we are keeping them informed about issues which matter to them.
25. The Resident Focus Project, which was commenced in response to an external review of customer service activity across Housing and Property Services, will also deliver further service improvements designed to have a positive impact on tenant satisfaction. The focus of this initiative is on making it easier for residents to access services, clarifying service standards and supporting staff to provide better customer service.

26. Staff throughout the Housing Division have recently completed initial “Positive Impact” customer service training provided by MGI, which is currently being embedded through a range of learning and development activities which will take place throughout the coming year. This training, along with improvements identified through the Resident Focus Project, is intended to improve customer service standards and enable staff to feel more confident in their roles. It is anticipated that these initiatives will positively impact these areas in particular:

- overall satisfaction
- satisfaction with estate office services
- satisfaction that the City is easy to deal with
- agreement that the City treats tenants fairly and with respect
- satisfaction with complaints handling

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

The results of the survey will be used to inform service improvements, not confined to those outlined above. This will support the delivery of the strategic aims in our Corporate Plan and, when launched, our new Housing Strategy.

Financial implications – none.

Resource implications – none.

Legal implications – none.

Risk implications – none.

Equalities implications – none.

Climate implications – none.

Security implications – none.

Conclusion

27. The first regulatory return for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures is due to be submitted by the end of June 2024.

28. The overall results have previously been reported to this Sub-Committee and this report provides Members with more information about the response to each question, plus information about additional questions which were asked about cost-of-living pressures and estate office services.

29. Officers are identifying service improvements and issues which can inform future communication with residents. Many of the themes of the TSMs will be addressed in the new Housing Strategy, which is currently in development. Additionally, supporting service plans will address more detailed actions with the intention of making targeted service improvements and supporting increased tenant satisfaction.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Breakdown of results for Tenant Perception Measures and Additional Questions

Background Papers

- Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, 30 January 2024, Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

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