

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	28 November 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Estate Satisfaction Survey Data Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Amy Carter, Community and Children's Services	

### **Summary**

This report summarises the results of the 2015/16 survey of residents of the City's social housing estates, including the sheltered housing schemes and the City of London and Gresham Almshouses.

The City of London is a member of Housemark, a benchmarking organisation which collects data from members to allow performance to be compared and trends identified. Every 2-3 years, member landlords are expected to carry out a 'STAR' (Survey of Tenants & Residents') using 7 core questions. This year is a STAR year for us.

The headline for this year's survey is that satisfaction with services is generally high amongst all residents. Over 80% of respondents are satisfied with the overall service, and satisfaction levels with the quality of their home and the cleanliness of their estate or scheme are particularly good.

Any negative findings of the survey will be used to target action in service areas where the need for improvement has been identified.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. An estate satisfaction survey is carried out annually and is sent to all tenants and leaseholders of the City's general needs housing and sheltered housing (including almshouses). The survey measures resident satisfaction across all estates and a range of service areas, and gathers suggestions for improvements or changes to the way we operate.
2. Every 3 years, the seven core 'STAR' survey questions are included to enable the City to benchmark its service against other Housing providers.
3. The survey took place in June this year.

### **Current Position**

4. The rate of return across general needs housing estates this year (18%) is slightly higher than 2014/15 (17%). Although this may seem low, the average response rate for STAR surveys in London is 21% and across England and Wales is 27% (when comparing a random sample of 10 landlords of a similar size to the City).
5. This year was the first year the survey was emailed to all residents who had provided us with their email address. We are delighted to confirm that 225 responses were received through the online survey. This represents 40% of all returns. We will continue to advertise future surveys by email and we will continue our work to seek email addresses from residents.
6. Following members' advice, an incentive to return the survey was also offered, in the form of the chance to win shopping vouchers. Unfortunately, this incentive has not had a sizeable impact upon the number of returns.
7. A summary of the 2015/16 survey questions and satisfaction ratings (together with the 2014/15 ratings) are set out in Table 1 below. Respondents were asked to answer the questions choosing from the following categories: very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. The figures provided show the combined percentages of residents who responded 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' in response to each of the questions asked.

**Estate Satisfaction Survey data comparison 2014/15 and 2015/16 – Table 1**

<b>Question</b> N.B – the question wording reflects the STAR survey questions and is therefore slightly different to the City’s wording in 2014/15; differences have been noted in the analysis.	<b>General Needs 2014/15</b>	<b>Sheltered 2014/15</b>	<b>General Needs 2015/16</b>	<b>Sheltered 2015/16</b>
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the City of London Corporation?	81%	95%	81%	88%
How satisfied are you with the cleanliness of your estate?	74%	93%	78%	89%
How satisfied are you with the customer services provided by your estate staff?	80%	n/a	83%	77%
How safe and secure do you feel on your estate?	70%	77%	73%	75%
Tenants Only How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money?	80%	97%	86%	96%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your service charges provide value for money?	30% (leaseholders only 2014/15)	n/a	74%	80%
Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the City of London Corporation deals with repairs and maintenance?	68%	89%	68%	88%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the City of London Corporation listens to your views and acts upon them?	67%	88%	73%	79%
How satisfied or dissatisfied with the information provided by the City of London Housing Services about your housing?	82%	97%	88%	93%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?	76%	89%	90%	96%

## Summary findings and analysis

8. Most residents who responded are proud of where they live, feel safe and are satisfied with the Housing services they receive from the City.
9. Satisfaction with services is generally high amongst all residents. A large majority – 81% of our general needs residents and 88% of our sheltered housing residents are satisfied with the overall service.

10. We received multiple positive comments about the services including:

‘It’s more safer [sic] now because of more security patrols on the estate.’  
which relates to the decision to employ the contractor Parkguard to undertake patrols on some estates.

Some of the typical responses we received to the question ‘How satisfied are you with the customer services provided by your estate staff?’

‘Always on hand. Always helpful’;

‘Always reply to emails and are helpful and courteous’

Many residents were keen to share what they liked about their neighbourhood:

‘I feel our estate is the best in the area.’

‘We live well amongst each other. A generally good community of people.’

‘Lived here for 75 of my 79 years and better housing around and new local shops... make it a much improved neighbourhood.’

11. We are also particularly pleased to note the marked increase in satisfaction that we listen to resident’s views and act upon them; this reflects our investment in our new Neighbourhood Development and Engagement team structure and approach.
12. Overall, general needs residents remain least satisfied with repairs and maintenance (68%). However, this figure should be treated with caution. The vast majority of repairs are carried out within tenants’ homes and, when satisfaction with these repairs is measured, as it is after each job, it is very high (96.3%). The figure of 68% includes the views of leaseholders, who can only reflect upon on communal repairs. These can often be complex and lengthy. Furthermore, we are aware that some residents will take this opportunity to reflect their dissatisfaction with the fact that major works are outstanding. As the five-year major works programme is further rolled out, we anticipate an improvement in these responses.

13. Whilst satisfaction levels remain high, there is a decrease in satisfaction across the measures for sheltered housing. This is not surprising, given the decision to redevelop Mais House. Although the team are working hard support residents during this unsettling time, it is inevitable that the residents there will be dissatisfied at present. Furthermore, the commencement of decent homes works at Harman Close, which causes disruption, has led to some dissatisfaction.
14. Where we have received reports of dissatisfaction and negative comments about the level of cleanliness, we intend to investigate further. We propose an enhanced programme of spot-checking, perhaps sending colleagues who are not usually based on that estate to ensure an equal service is offered to all of our residents. Furthermore, we may undertake consultation at some estates, to establish whether the residents wish for a higher level of cleaning to be commissioned, with the associated increase in service charge being clearly explained at the point of consultation.
15. There is marked difference amongst tenures in the perception of value for money. In general needs social housing, the perception of value for money with rent has increased from 80% to 86%. In 2014/15, the question regarding service charges was for leaseholder response only, which resulted in a 30% satisfaction rate. The STAR survey requires all residents to be asked the question (as both residents and leaseholders pay a service charge) and the satisfaction rate for both tenants and leaseholders is 74%.
16. Response rates and satisfaction levels also vary geographically across the City's housing estates. For example:

9% of the general needs residents at Sydenham Hill responded, of those 8 residents, 5 (62.5%) were very satisfied with the services provided.

67% of the residents in Horace Jones House responded to the survey, and 85% stated overall satisfaction with services.
17. In a significant positive change from last year, 83% of Middlesex Street residents now report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the service overall, compared to 53% in 2014/15. This may relate to the fact the major works to the estate and improvements to the public realm are now underway.

### **Comparison to Other Housing Providers in London**

18. We are able to compare our performance to that of other London authorities and housing associations using the STAR data they have submitted. In the majority of measures, the City performs extremely well. Some highlights of the the comparisons are as follows:
  - Our general needs resident's satisfaction that their rent provides value for money is 86% which is 4.5% above the upper quartile for all other London providers.

- The average (median) for resident satisfaction that the authority listens to resident's views and acts upon them is 50% and the upper quartile is 56.6%, the City's satisfaction rate is 73%.
- For the question 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?' our sheltered residents reported 96% satisfaction, which is 3.5% above the highest other authority who has submitted data.
- Our resident's satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service is 68% for general needs and 88% for sheltered which is below the London upper quartiles 70.5% for general needs and 89.1% for sheltered but above the median amounts (66.4 and 82% respectively).

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

19. Undertaking an annual Satisfaction Survey positively contributes to the Department's strategic objectives. Asking residents to comment on our performance and receiving their perception of our service helps us to ensure we are meeting their needs. This contributes towards Priority 4 - Homes and communities: Developing strong neighbourhoods and ensuring people have a decent place to live; and Priority 5 - Efficiency and effectiveness: Delivering value for money and outstanding services.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

20. The survey data has been collated on an estate by estate basis. Officers will use the data to incorporate any necessary changes into service plans and individual estate plans for 2017 to ensure the key findings from the survey are addressed.
21. The survey data will allow officers to target remedial measures more effectively in those specific areas where there is the greatest potential for service improvements and an increase in residents' satisfaction.

### **Appendices**

None

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