



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 27 AUGUST 2019

SUBJECT: TENANT SURVEY 2018

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the service improvement actions arising from the findings of the 2018 Tenant Survey.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (15) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Council's performance management framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee considers and notes the areas for improvement set out in section 4.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council has carried out a number of independent surveys to gather tenants' views on Housing Services. Tenant feedback has an important role in assessing 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 SHR expects landlords to carry out a survey of tenants at least once every three years.

3.3 On 2 April 2019, this Committee considered the main findings of the Tenant Survey 2018 and agreed that a further report would be presented which would set out improvement actions required by the Housing Service (paragraph 12 of the Minute refers).

4. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1 The main areas identified for improvement and the actions required to be taken forward by service managers are detailed below under each of the main themes. The majority of improvement actions are linked to existing work streams and are monitored and progressed through the performance management framework and the Service Improvement Plan.

The length and time taken to respond to or carry out repairs

- 4.2 The satisfaction rate for repairs and maintenance was positive (79%) but comments from tenants have identified some areas which need to be addressed.
- 4.3 Some tenants felt that improvements could be made to the time taken to respond to or carry out repairs. There were comments which suggested appointments were not being kept and follow-on appointments not always arranged. There were also comments about the quality of workmanship and materials. Some tenants felt that a replacement would be more appropriate than multiple visits or temporary fixes.
- 4.4 Timescales for repairs performance indicators are monitored closely by service managers as part of the Housing Service's performance management framework. Although these are indicators for which performance is generally good in comparison with other local authorities, they are the focus of ongoing improvement activity. Service managers are aware of the issues highlighted by tenants and are currently reviewing processes to make improvements within the repairs and maintenance service. A review of ICT systems within the Direct Labour Organisation will be progressed in 2019/20 which will consider system improvements linked to the issues identified with appointments.

Feeling their home needs upgraded or improved

- 4.5 An area with a significant reduction in satisfaction was the quality of the home (-12% since 2015). A number of tenants reported that their home was in need of upgrading with improvement priorities identified as heating, windows, bathrooms and kitchens. These preferences have been prioritised within the Council's Housing Investment Programme. Heating upgrades and other energy efficiency measures are the focus of the Council's programme to ensure that its housing is compliant with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). The programme will also deliver major investment in window and kitchen replacements.
- 4.6 Some tenants felt their homes were difficult or expensive to heat with some reluctant to upgrade because this would increase their weekly rent. The EESH programme will ensure that the Council's homes are energy efficient and as warm as possible which will help to address fuel poverty. Progress reports on the EESH programme are regularly reported as part of the Housing Investment Report which is a separate item on this Committee's agenda.
- 4.7 A stock condition survey and review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan will take place during 2019/20. This will help to identify the levels of investment required to improve the quality of housing. The findings

of the stock condition survey will be reported to this Committee early next year and tenants will be updated through the Tenants' Voice newsletter and online.

Communication and customer service issues

- 4.8 On closer analysis, the comments relating to communication and customer services are mainly about keeping in touch with tenants about the progress of repairs or maintenance. There were also concerns that sometimes it takes too long to get through to the right person or for the service to respond to queries. Service managers are aware of the issues and are working on improvements to processes as part of the Service Improvement Plan which is due to be presented to this Committee in October 2019.

Rent and affordability

- 4.9 The survey raised concerns about some households experiencing difficulties with rent affordability. Another concern was fuel poverty with almost half (45%) saying they had wanted to put their heating on but had chosen not to because of affordability issues. This is another area which will be addressed through improvements to homes as part of the EESSH programme. A Council house rent freeze was implemented for 2019/20 and the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan this year will also make recommendations on future rent increases.

Getting involved

- 4.10 Despite an improvement in satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making (+8%), some tenants were still unaware or felt that their input would not lead to meaningful changes. Tenant engagement options will continue to be promoted regularly in the Tenants' Voice and online through the website and social media using examples of where tenants have influenced service delivery. The Council is currently taking part in the Scottish Government's Next Steps Programme which will identify further areas for improving tenant participation opportunities to be implemented under the current Tenant Participation Strategy.

Neighbourhood issues

- 4.11 There was an improvement in performance on neighbourhood satisfaction. The main themes varied and included issues with neighbours, pets, parking, the condition of gardens, drug issues, speeding cars, lack of visibility in terms of the management of the neighbourhood and lack of or condition of play areas for children. Parking and dog fouling were viewed as the most serious problems. Many of the issues on landscape maintenance, litter, the condition of roads and paths fall out with the scope of the Council's landlord role and improvement may be difficult given the wider Council's financial position. However, the Housing Service will work with other services including the Community Safety Team to address issues where possible. The Housing Service will continue to identify solutions through estate management processes and working alongside tenants to identify improvements through the estate upgrades budget.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Moray 2026 identifies that customer engagement is a priority to improve 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 outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

(c) Financial implications

Any costs associated with implementing improvements will be met from within existing budgets and will be factored into the Housing Investment Programme for 2020/21.

(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/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has been carried out with Acting Head of Housing and Property, senior managers in the Housing and Property Service, Senior Solicitor Property and Contracts (Kathryn Macpherson), the Principal Accountant (Deborah O'Shea), and Committee Services Officer (Caroline Howie) who are in agreement with the report where it relates to their area of responsibility.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report details the improvement actions identified following the 2018 Tenant Survey.

Author of Report: Daska Murray, Senior Housing Officer (Information)
Background Papers: Held by author
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