



**ARTICLE NO: 2B**

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE:**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2014/15  
ISSUE: 3**

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**Article of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

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**SUBJECT: SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

- 1.1 To update Members with performance and key messages emerging from the survey results from this year's biennial survey of tenants & residents and present the findings report and accompanying communication plan.
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## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In order to comply with Government statutory requirements to report performance against National Indicator (NI) 160 (Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services), the Housing Service completed a STATUS survey every two years. The Government provided financial support to undertake this survey.
- 2.2 With effect from August 2010 the requirement to submit data for NI 160 was withdrawn by the Government following their review of National Indicators.
- 2.3 The Chartered Institute of Housing & Housemark felt there was merit in Social Housing Providers continuing with a survey as it serves as a tool to drive improvements and can be used to benchmark performance against other housing providers. The survey was reviewed and renamed as the Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR).
- 2.4 The Housing Service now runs STAR biennially with the fieldwork for this year's survey being undertaken in July. From a housing stock of 6010, 984 questionnaires were compiled by MEL Research, an independent market research company. The results therefore providing an overall confidence level of  $\pm 2.9\%$ .

- 2.5 The Housing & Regeneration Service has a vision, “to be a top performing landlord within an economically vibrant West Lancs”, and these results will be used to highlight areas of success and to target areas where we can do better and which will help us achieve our vision.
- 2.6 A detailed presentation of the results will be made to Service Managers by the independent market research company. Resultant actions for improvement will be identified where appropriate and subsequently included within team / service area action plans.

### 3.0 KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1 Table 1 below sets out a list of core questions in respect of satisfaction levels and which have been benchmarked nationally against other social housing providers.

Core Question	STAR Result 2014	Peer Group - National			
		Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile	
Overall service provided	86%	82%	88%	90%	Upper Quartile
Overall quality of home	87%	81%	85%	89%	Above Median
Neighbourhood as a place to live	90%	83%	86%	89%	Below Median
Rent provides VfM	86%	78%	82%	87%	Lower Quartile
Repairs and maintenance	83%	76%	82%	87%	
Listen to views and act upon them	82%	64%	69%	76%	

**Table 1 2014 results for West Lancashire Borough Council against National Social Housing Providers (61 organisations in total)**

- 3.2 Members will note the positive results listed and that our aim of upper quartile performance by 2012 has been achieved in some areas. Whilst the majority of the core satisfaction results have improved, overall satisfaction has reduced by 1% from the 2012 survey. The reason for this is yet unclear and whilst this should not be ignored, it is not statistically significant given the confidence levels mentioned earlier in the report.
- 3.3 The findings report does reveal that general needs tenants overall satisfaction with the services provided has increased from 82% (2012) to 85 % (2014). This is in contrast to sheltered tenants where overall satisfaction levels have decreased from 91% (2012) to 88% (2014). There have been some recent changes to how services are delivered to sheltered tenants and there is a possibility of some unsettlement within the service whilst these changes are embedded. Members will be aware that there are more changes due in the future, due to changes in Supporting People funding arrangements however, we will try to mitigate the impact by consulting and working closely with tenants.

3.4 Table 2 sets out the direction of travel against each of the key questions asked in the survey. Members will note that “Keeping tenants informed” is not a question asked nationally and therefore no benchmark data is available.
















Key Performance Indicators		2014	% dif.	2012
	Overall satisfaction	86%	 -1%	87%
	Quality of home	87%	 +3%	84%
	Condition of property	87%	 +3%	84%
	Neighbourhood	90%	 +3%	87%
	Rent provides VfM	86%	 +3%	83%
	Repairs & maintenance	83%	 +2%	81%
	Listens to views	82%	-	82%
	Keeping tenants informed	77%	 -6%	83%

Table 2 – Direction of Travel

3.5 Significant investment in tenants’ homes has yielded improvements to satisfaction in some of the key areas however, this may have adversely affected the ‘keeping tenants informed’ result. The focus has been on procuring and delivering the investment programme and not taking into account the need to provide tenants with regular updates on progress. This along with examining how newsletters are produced and how tenants are kept informed across the service area will be the focus for future improvement actions.

3.6 Contact with the Council – The survey results highlighted that of those tenants that had contacted the Council in the last 12 months only 2% had done so by completing an on-line form. This is an area where we need to improve as this is

by far the cheapest and most efficient way of delivering service and an area where the Government and the housing sector has recognised the need to shift delivery channels. The Government's "Digital by Default" agenda, linked to Universal Credit roll out, will mean that this channel shift will happen and we will need to align our service delivery mechanisms, not only to make efficiencies but to ensure tenants are not being socially excluded by not having access to digital channels.

- 3.7 4% fewer tenants who made contact with the Council found staff to be helpful in comparison to 2012, and 6% were less satisfied with the final outcome.
- 3.8 76% of tenants who contacted the Council in person or by telephone found that the first person they spoke to were able to resolve their query. This proportion has decreased when compared to 2012 (81%).
- 3.9 Of those whose query was not resolved by the first person they spoke to, 58% found it easy to get hold of someone who could deal with their query, whilst 30% found it difficult. The proportion of tenants who found it easy to get hold of someone to deal with their query has increased since 2012 (53%).
- 3.10 Members will be aware that Landlord Services has recently been the subject of an Organisational Reengineering exercise where a number of recommendations for service improvement have been made, but are yet to be implemented. It is expected that once implemented and embedded, these recommendations will yield improvements in some of the key areas surveyed.
- 3.11 It is essential that the results of the survey are communicated to all relevant stakeholders. A communication plan has therefore been established and appended to the report.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost to appoint an independent research company to undertake this year's Survey of Tenants & Residents amounted to £7,775.00, however this was met using existing resources.

#### **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Overall the survey results are positive and show that the Housing service is moving in the right direction in most of the areas. However, there is still significant work to be achieved for the service to achieve its ambition of being a top performing landlord within an economically vibrant West Lancs.
- 5.2 The survey results will be used to influence service action plans for Housing & Regeneration and other relevant service areas, and to focus efforts on achieving our aims.

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## **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

The Article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - West Lancashire Borough Council STAR Survey 2014 - FINDINGS REPORT September 2014.

Appendix 2 - STAR Communication Plan.