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| Report to | Communities Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting | 1st July 2021 |
| Lead Member / Officer | Tony Thomas / Liz Grieve |
| Report author | Geoff Davies |
| Title | Council Housing Tenants Survey |

1. What is the report about?

Community Housing undertakes a survey of all council house tenants every 2 years. This report summarises the feedback from the survey of council tenants and Community Housing's proposals to respond to the findings.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To gain an understanding of tenants views about their homes and neighbourhoods, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 lockdowns and the impact on our tenants.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Communities Scrutiny Committee provide input into the Service's proposed actions to respond to the Survey's findings that will support the delivery of the Council's "Housing and Resilient Communities" corporate priorities.

4. Report details

Appendix 1 is a detailed report into the responses given by council tenants to the survey undertaken in Autumn/Winter 2020/21. This report summarises the key findings and outlines what is proposed in order to respond to this feedback.

In October 2020, a STAR (Standardised Tenants & Residents) survey was sent to every council home in Denbighshire. Out of the 3,277 surveys sent, responses were received from 381 households which is an 11% response rate.

The survey, which is issued every 2 years, asks for detailed feedback on a wide range of service areas provided by Community Housing. The purpose of the survey is to assess overall satisfaction, seek feedback on priorities for our tenants and to help inform plans for future service delivery.

It is now a requirement for all councils and registered social landlords (RSLs) in Wales to carry out a STAR survey every 2 years.

Welsh Government (WG) have cited Denbighshire as an example of good practice in the appropriate use and implementation of STAR. In February 2021 we jointly delivered with WG an all Wales event for social landlords in Wales.

Overall satisfaction with the key measures are lower than the previous survey in 2019. It should be noted however that whilst there has been an increase in dissatisfaction there has also been an increase in the non-committal neither satisfied nor dissatisfied responses, which indicates tenants were not able to fully rate the service due to the Covid pandemic lockdown.

Whilst we expected that it would be more difficult for tenants to respond as normal during the Covid pandemic, we felt it was important to run the survey when it was due to help inform plans for the post pandemic recovery.

It has been noted by WG when comparing landlords' data, that the data supplied by Denbighshire was impacted by the pandemic when many other social landlords submitted pre-Covid data. In response to this, WG have asked all councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to re-run the STAR survey again for April 2022. This means we will repeat the survey again later this year.

Main Satisfaction Outcomes

A summary of the core satisfaction responses is below -

- 77% of our tenants said they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.
- 80% of our tenants said they were satisfied that Housing provides a home that is safe and secure.
- 76% of our tenants said they were satisfied that Housing is easy to deal with
- 77% of our tenants said they were satisfied that Housing listen to them and act on their views

- 79% of our tenants said they were satisfied with the overall neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 78% of our tenants said they were satisfied that their rent provides value for money
- 59% of our tenants said they were satisfied that their service charge provides value for money
- 71% of our tenants said they were satisfied with the repair service provided by Housing

Priorities

We asked tenants to rank their top 3 service priorities. In previous surveys the top 3 priorities have always been the quality of the property and the repairs service however on this occasion, 78% of respondents felt that the priorities are:

- Feeling Safe and Safety
- Neighbourhood & Community
- Good Neighbours

This suggests a change in focus from the home to the local community during the lockdowns. Information on priorities is outlined in the table (page 8 of appendix 1) with area breakdowns (page 27 of appendix 1) although these are generally consistent across all areas of the county.

Areas for Improvement

When asked about the main areas for improvements, the highest responses were –

- Improve the quality of the home (internally) - 15%,
- Improve communication -14%
- Improve the quality of the property (externally) - 9%

When we analysed the detail on this, the main issues raised with the internal quality of the home were issues with damp and heating.

In terms of communication improvements, respondents stated we should respond quicker to queries.

Area Analysis

Feedback is analysed by area to see if there are any significant differences in how tenants feel in different parts of the county (page 29 of appendix 1). Overall there are similar themes around the priority of “Feeling Safe and Safety” in all areas. In terms of areas where we can improve it is noticeable that there are variations in Denbigh around repairs and communication in Corwen, Llangollen and Ruthin.

Comparison to 2019

The information and graphs (on page 31 of appendix 1) shows the comparison between this survey and the most recent undertaken in 2019.

There has been decreases in satisfaction across all areas of the survey.

| Theme | Satisfied 2021 | Change +/- 2019 | Dissatisfied +/- change | Neither +/- change |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Satisfaction with the overall quality of the home | 77% | -13% | +8% | +5% |
| Satisfaction we listen and act on views | 67% | -8% | +4% | +4% |
| Satisfaction with the neighbourhood | 79% | -9% | +3% | +6% |
| Satisfaction that rent provides value for money (VFM) | 79% | -9% | +6% | +3% |
| Satisfaction that service charge provides VFM | 59% | -13% | +6% | +7% |
| Satisfaction with the overall repair service | 71% | -18% | +9% | +9% |

Our Response

Included in the Communities & Customers Business Plan for 2021/22 is an action to “Implement STAR feedback action plan”.

The action plan is included in Appendix 2.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs

The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no costs associated with this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A Well-being assessment is not required as no changes are proposed.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

This report is being brought to Communities Scrutiny and will be shared with the Tenants Federation (DTARF)

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no costs associated with this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The risk is we do not respond to feedback from tenants which leads to increased dissatisfaction.

11. Power to make the decision

Scrutiny's powers in relation to this matter are set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act, 2000 and Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution.