

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 3 May 2023**

Subject: Tenant Satisfaction Survey**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This purpose of this report is to provide members of the Housing and Communities Committee with the results of a comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey on Housing and Homelessness Services that has been carried out and the results of which will be reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of our 2022/23 Scottish Social Housing Charter requirements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:
- (i) note the contents of this report and recognises the Tenant Satisfaction levels across all areas of housing and homelessness services since the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
 - (ii) approve the improvement action plan developed to address the drivers of dissatisfaction raised by tenants and instruct the Chief Officer Housing and Employability and the Chief Officer, Supply, Distribution and Property to fully implement this action plan;
 - (iii) note that this satisfaction data will be reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) as part of our Annual Return on the Charter (ARC); and
 - (iv) agree that the information and improvement plan contained in this report is shared with the West Dunbartonshire Tenant Scrutiny Panel and WDTRO (West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisations) and is distributed more widely to tenants and housing and homelessness staff.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) requires all social landlords to have robust and up to date Customer Satisfaction information and to report this annually to the SHR via the ARC.
- 3.2** In order to meet this obligation, it was agreed by Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in November 2013 that a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey be carried out on an annual basis for the duration of the first 4 full years of the Charter, when it would then be reviewed by the Scottish Housing Regulator and Scottish Government.

Subsequently, after the review it was agreed in partnership with tenants and residents organisations that a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey would be carried out for our housing and homelessness services every second year.

- 3.3** However, because of service priorities emanating from the recovery from the pandemic, the planned survey to be carried out in 2021/22 was delayed until 2022/23.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The main aim of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey was to seek tenant views of the housing landlord services provided by the Council and to identify areas where the service can be improved.

- 4.2** The survey was designed to meet the guidance provided by the Scottish Housing Regulator with regard to assessing tenant satisfaction. As such, the survey was designed to ensure that:

- the questions asked covered the key tenant satisfaction Charter indicators in the way which is prescribed.
- the sample was designed to meet the guidance provided by the Scottish Housing Regulator which states that a minimum of data accurate to +/-5% should be achieved and the sample should be designed to be representative of the organisation's tenant population.

- 4.3** The IPSOS MORI guidance prepared on behalf of the Regulator debates the use of a range of different methodologies for carrying out large scale tenant satisfaction surveys, including postal, online, telephone and face to face survey methods.

- 4.4** Given the requirement to achieve data accurate to +/-5% and ensuring a representative sample of tenants, it was decided that the tenant survey was carried out utilising a telephone survey. The main benefits of this were:

- utilising an interviewer led methodology allows us to maximise the response rate;
- this methodology is an inclusive methodology and allows interviewers to ensure that, for example, elderly or those with a disability or literacy problems can be included in the process; and
- the methodology facilitates high quality of survey output as it allows the interviewer to build up a rapport with the participant ensuring that the questionnaire is answered in full and allowing explanation of the necessity for asking personal data.

- 4.5** A total of 600 telephone interviews were carried out between 11 October and 27 November 2022, providing data accurate to +/-4.25%. Analysis of the participant profile shows that the survey sample is broadly representative by geography and property size. Therefore, there was no requirement for the survey data to be weighted.

- 4.6** The table below shows the results for the six Charter Indicators that this survey is used as the source for and assesses performance trends over the period of the Scottish Social Housing Charter:

West Dunbartonshire Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2022	Satisfaction level since 2014
% of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	72%	81%	84%	84%	79%	68%	-4%
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	74%	80%	81%	86%	77%	73%	-1%
% of tenants who feel that their rent represents good value for money	67%	73%	68%	75%	77%	61%	-6%
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and decisions	72%	76%	87%	84%	86%	76%	+4%
% of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making	52%	59%	67%	79%	84%	69%	+17%
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	76%	78%	80%	80%	79%	63%	-13%

Overall Satisfaction

- 4.7** The survey opened by asking respondents how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the overall service provided by West Dunbartonshire Council as their landlord. A majority of tenants (68%) are satisfied with the housing service overall, whilst 28% are dissatisfied.
- 4.8** Considering overall tenant satisfaction by property size (as measured by bed spaces), satisfaction ranges from 69.5% for 1 bed homes, through 69.4% for two bed properties to 55.7% for three or more bed homes.
- 4.9** Analysis of the responses for overall tenant satisfaction by housing format illustrates some degree of variation, e.g. 66.7% satisfied for tenants living in tenements compared to 50.0% satisfied amongst those living in end terrace homes.
- 4.10** In terms of newer homes overall tenant satisfaction was 100% in homes built after 2021 compared with 60% in older homes.
- 4.11** In relation to Council areas, the most satisfied tenants overall reside in Dumbarton (66.2% satisfied) and Alexandria (62.6% satisfied), whilst the

least satisfied are living in Clydebank (58.5%).

Repairs and maintenance

- 4.12** The satisfaction data relating to repairs for our ARC submission is sourced via the existing exit surveys (as per the technical guidance). However, we also use the opportunity in this representative survey to ask all tenants about their general satisfaction with repairs and maintenance.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2022	Satisfaction level since 2014
Generally how satisfied are you with the way your landlord deals with repairs and maintenance	66%	69%	77%	81%	75%	68%	+2%

- 4.13** 68% of tenants surveyed were very or fairly satisfied in this respect compared to 7% who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 25% who were very or fairly dissatisfied. Satisfaction has decreased since the last survey from 75% in 2019 to 68% in 2022. However, satisfaction levels are higher than those recorded in the baseline survey in 2014 after the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. It is evident from the wider responses that the impacts of the pandemic and the subsequent recovery period have been a factor in the wider satisfaction levels.

Value for Money

- 4.14** Respondents were then asked what factors they deem to be important with regards to value for money. Respondents were most likely to say investment in their home and new homes by their landlord (94%) was very important, followed by how much income they have left after paying their rent (85%), the quality of service they receive from their landlord (81%) and how their rent compares with other landlords (80%).
- 4.15** When asked what they would like to see the Council spending more money on, tenants were most likely to say more regular maintenance programmes (93%) followed by a new house build programme (92%) and an increased budget for external improvements (41%).
- 4.16** More than six in ten (61%) believed the rent for their home represents very or fairly good value for money, compared to 24% who said it was neither good nor poor value for money and 15% who rated it as very or fairly poor value.
- 4.17** Over seven in ten tenants (72%) of respondents were in receipt of full or partial housing benefit, compared with 28% who said they paid full rent. Those who paid their rent (either fully or partially) were asked how easy they find it to afford the rent payments for their home. Only 37% said the

rent for their home was very or fairly easy to afford, 45% said it was just about affordable and 18% said it was very or fairly difficult to afford.

- 4.18** Analysis of rent value by property size shows that tenants living in 1 bed homes are the most positive on this measure (64.4% say rent is good value), whilst the least positive are those living in 2 bed properties (57.1%).
- 4.20** In relation to property type, tenants living in semi-detached homes (74.2% say rent is good value) are the most likely to say that rent is good value for money. Tenants living in end terrace homes (54.8% say rent is good value), or other types of property (54.5%), are the least likely to be positive about rent value.
- 4.21** Measured by area, the most positive tenants on rent value live in Dumbarton (75.2% say rent is good value) which compares favourably to both Clydebank (58.5%) and Alexandria (52.2%).

Housing quality

- 4.22** Most tenants (73%) are satisfied with housing quality (27%) are dissatisfied. The 2022/23 figure for satisfaction is 4% points lower than 2019 (77% satisfied). The 2021/22 sector average for housing quality satisfaction is 77.2% (based on results submitted since April 2020).
- 4.23** Housing quality satisfaction is highest for tenants living in 1 bed homes and lowest for those living in 2 bed homes (only 60.6%). There is some degree of variation in satisfaction with housing quality by property type with the highest satisfaction found amongst tenants living in semi-detached homes (88%).
- 4.24** Analysis of housing quality satisfaction by area shows that the most satisfied area in relation to housing quality is Dumbarton (80.6% satisfied) whilst the least satisfied area is Clydebank (68.9%).
- 4.25** Only one in three tenants (36.0%) agreed that they can easily afford to heat their home; 49.2% disagreed. Compared with previous data, it is notable that the proportion of tenants who cannot afford to easily heat their home has more than doubled. This can be easily attributed to the wider cost of living crisis and the wider impact on the enjoyment our tenants have of their home as a result.

Tenant Participation and Engagement

- 4.26** More than 7 in 10 tenants (76%) said their landlord was good at keeping them informed about services and decisions against 24% who said the Council was poor on this measure. The sector average in 2022 was 80.8%.
- 4.27** 69% of tenants were happy with opportunities to participate in decision making against 25% of tenants who were dissatisfied with these opportunities. It is noticeable that the level of dissatisfaction has increased from 12% at the last comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey and this

might reflect tenants' views on decision making and responsiveness within the service.

- 4.28** Respondents were asked about the source of information they use to obtain information about the Council's housing services. Written communications were the most common method used, with 85% stating they use the quarterly newsletter Housing News, this compares with 18% that use social media platforms.

Neighbourhood management

- 4.29** More than six in ten tenants (63%) are satisfied with neighbourhood management, whilst 27.8% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction with neighbourhood management varies by area:-

Dumbarton – 69%

Alexandria – 62%

Clydebank – 61%

Summary and Improvement actions

- 4.30** Whilst a majority of tenants have expressed satisfaction with the housing services they receive from the Council, a sometimes large minority have identified some dissatisfaction and based on the tenant feedback in these and other areas, these are 5 main areas of dissatisfaction which in large have informed the Improvement plan attached as Appendix 1 of this report. The five areas are stated below:-

- Being able to heat the home
- Housing quality
- Repair service
- Management of the neighbourhood
- Rent value for money

- 4.31** The design of our tenant satisfaction survey meant that any tenants who expressed dissatisfaction were asked to expand about the reasons for this. The feedback has been analysed in some detail and an identified need for improvement in the following five areas:-

- Better repair service (quality, speed, keep appointments) (19.0% of all tenants)
- Be more responsive, follow up and resolve issues, reduce delays (9.7%)
- Be easier to contact, have better communications (7.2%)
- Improve internal parts of the home (5.2%)
- Deal with anti-social behaviour more effectively (neighbours, youths, pets) (4.7%).

4.32 Improvement actions have been developed to address areas of dissatisfaction and is improvement plan is attached as Appendix 1.

5. People Implications

5.1 Developing appropriate service responses in areas where weaknesses are identified will be managed from within existing staffing resources.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 There are no financial and procurement implications. Any improvement actions will be resourced within existing resource allocation and budget.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is a risk that failure to have a comprehensive approach toward Customer Satisfaction and toward benchmarking as part of our wider response to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, would attract an adverse reaction from the Scottish Housing Regulator.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The proposals do not alter any existing policy or pattern of service delivery and so is not considered to require an equalities impact assessment.

9. Consultation

9.1 The findings from the tenant satisfaction survey will be presented to tenant representatives and we will develop an agreed process for ongoing tenant involvement in the monitoring of the Improvement Action Plan attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The proposals contained in this report directly address all of the Council's strategic priorities. The investment in, and provision of attractive affordable housing will also indirectly support the objective of economic growth and employability through supporting employment and improving place attractiveness.

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Date: 18 April 2023

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Tenant Satisfaction Survey Improvement Action Plan

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All