

Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009



Falkirk Council
Housing & Social Work Services

Appendix C (9)

Summary of Tenant Questionnaire

TENANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE - NOVEMBER 2003

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to feedback the findings of a satisfaction survey recently carried out by Housing Services. This report will only outline briefly the findings, but the full survey results and comments from tenants are available as a separate report. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as an appendix for reference purposes.

BACKGROUND

During November 2003, Housing Services carried out a survey amongst its tenants. The purpose of the survey was to seek tenants' views on the current housing service and to ascertain how satisfied tenants are with Falkirk Council as a landlord.

The survey was targeted at as wide a range of tenants as possible so that a balanced view from all groups could be considered. The questionnaire was distributed through random selection and posted to 10% of all tenants throughout the Falkirk district. It was also sent to every member of the Consultation Register, with a batch of questionnaires being sent to Tenants Groups. The groups were asked to promote and distribute the questionnaire amongst its members. To ensure that as many tenants as possible had the opportunity to be involved, questionnaires were given out to tenants visiting the Area Housing Offices and Neighbourhood Officers issued them whilst carrying out home-visits. A Press Release was printed in Falkirk Herald to help promote the survey launch.

To encourage participation a postage-paid envelope was enclosed with the survey. A free prize draw to win a £50 voucher was also offered as an incentive. All returned forms completed with names and addresses were entered. A tenant from the Bog district of Falkirk won the prize.

Tenants were advised that the survey results would be published in the next edition of the Falkirk News (March 2004).

Approximately 3,000 questionnaires were distributed – with 926 forms being returned, giving a 32% response rate.

REPORT FINDINGS

1. Satisfaction with the Housing Service (incorporating Question 2, 3, 4, 11, 14)

87% of respondents indicated that they were *satisfied* with Falkirk Council as their landlord. Only 1.6% of the respondents indicated that they would consider transferring their tenancy to another landlord.

76% of respondents indicated that they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the Housing Service, with 23% indicating that they felt the service had improved

in the past year and 62% indicated it had stayed about the same.

Question 4 asked the satisfaction level of various aspects of the housing service, including service provision from other Council Services. This referred to customer care, availability of information, estate management service, repairs service and rent/benefits service provided. Respondents indicated that they were *satisfied* with 10 of the 11 services. The exception being “*time Housing Officer spends in your estate*” with 27% of tenants indicating they were *neither satisfied or dissatisfied* compared to 24% indicating *satisfied*. Overall, 55% of respondents agreed that Falkirk Council provides a good level of housing service (Question 11).

Whilst, overall it is very encouraging that the majority of the respondents felt that the Council provides a good service, it should be recognised that from some of the comments made within Question 4 comments box, that there is still room for improvement. There were a wide range of positive and negative comments covering all aspects of the housing service, examples:

“*very satisfied, repairs always promptly seen to when reported*”

“*sometimes the repairs could be quicker*”

“*very helpful in my benefit enquiry*”

“*too many queues when paying rent*”

“*everyone helpful and kind*”

“*never seen a housing officer on our estate*”

“*never had any problems with any neighbours*”

“*anti social behaviour is becoming worse*”

2. Condition of Properties and Neighbourhoods

(Questions 6 & 8)

54% of respondents were *satisfied* with the condition of their home – 3% indicated that they were *totally unsatisfied*.

66% of respondents were either *satisfied* (46%) or *very satisfied* (20%) with their neighbourhood/estate – 12% were *dissatisfied* and 6% were *very dissatisfied*.

The results of this survey have shown that the majority of respondents are satisfied with their homes and the communities that they live in. However, the Council has a responsibility to ensure this “sense of community” is promoted and encouraged by ensuring good estate management planning continues to be progressed.

3. Priorities for Improvements and Investment

(Questions 5 & 7)

50% of all respondents indicated that any extra money should be invested in internal improvements (e.g. kitchens/bathrooms). This opinion is further supported by the responses to Question 7 – where the highest preference was kitchen units (14%), followed by central heating (13%) and the fourth preference being bathrooms (8%).

Improving repair responses (45%) was also indicated as an area where additional money should be spent. Although external improvements (44%) is also highlighted as a high priority.

Repairs maintenance and improvement programmes were all indicated as high priorities for spending additional income, and all scored higher than the other aspects of the housing service listed as options. Taking account of the high number of repairs and maintenance issues that are highlighted in the comments boxes, it is clear that tenants placed a great emphasis on the repairs service the Council provides.

4. Tenant Involvement & Information Provision (Questions 9, 10)

17% of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in being involved – 60% stated that they were not. The most popular method of involvement is joining a tenants group (37%), followed by carrying out surveys (34%) and regular seminars (32%).

57% of respondents indicated that they would like to receive information on housing issues. The three most popular responses were home improvements (51%), tackling anti-social behaviour (34%), and the repairs service (34%). The least popular information topics were Housing Policy & Performance (8%) and Budget Setting Procedures (7%).

Falkirk Council has a statutory obligation to develop a Tenant Participation Strategy in consultation with tenants. It is important that the right methods of communication and information are made available to allow tenants to choose how they wish to become involved, if at all. All of the methods listed within the questionnaire are methods promoted by the Tenant Participation Strategy.

5. Respondents' Profile (Question 12, 13, further information)

As stated previously, the questionnaires were evenly distributed across the whole district. The return rate for each area was roughly comparable to the Council housing stock in the area. The only exception to this was the Falkirk area, which had the highest response rate at 21.5% compared to an overall area stock level of 12%. The highest response rate of 29% was from tenants residing in 4 in a block properties, which again is the largest property type owned by the Council.

6. The Council has a duty to ensure that tenants from all groups have the opportunity to voice their views. The last section of the questionnaire asked for information relating to minority groups. The elderly age groups (61+) made up 68% of all respondents, with only 6% aged 21-30 years and 1% under 21 years responding.

46% of respondents indicated that they considered themselves to have a disability.

100% of the respondents described their ethnic origin as White – 95% being White Scottish. Falkirk Council has a very low ethnic minority population, with only 0.5% of the population residing in Council housing.

55% of respondents were in receipt of housing benefit.

Overall, it is considered that a wide range of tenants from various groups have had their views considered within this survey. Although, consideration will be

given to specifically target certain minority groups to ensure all tenants have the opportunity to contribute to future surveys and consultation.

CONCLUSION

The questions contained within this survey were at a basic level, with the purpose of ascertaining the views of tenants on the housing service and their opinion of the Council as a landlord. Whilst, specific issues have been raised that will require further consideration and it is acknowledged there are no grounds for complacency. The general feedback from this survey is positive and encouraging.

The response rate to the survey at 32% is excellent if compared to a previous Council Satisfaction Survey enclosed with an edition of Falkirk News during 2002, which had a 2% return.

THE WAY FORWARD

- The results of this survey will be used as a baseline for future surveys.
- The findings of this report will be published in the Falkirk News and a press release will be issued to the Falkirk Herald.
- The information gleaned relative to each aspect of the housing service, including the statistical information and comments, will be forwarded to each service for wider circulation. Wherever relevant, the survey results will be used when considering future service delivery issues.

Elizabeth Hood
Tenant Participation Co-ordinator
15 January 2004