

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: TENANTS' SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT
WAITING LIST SURVEY REPORT**
MEETING: HOUSING & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE: 5 FEBRUARY 2008
AUTHOR: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members the findings of Falkirk Council's Tenant Satisfaction Survey and Waiting List Survey which were carried out during 2007. The aim of the surveys was to obtain an overall measure of tenant opinion with regard to key areas of service delivery and to identify priorities for service improvement.
- 1.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 has placed statutory responsibility upon the Council to ensure that we consult with tenants on all housing related issues and that they are able to influence how the Service is planned for improvement and delivery. These surveys will assist the Council in meeting this statutory obligation.
- 1.3 The survey was designed to provide information on:
- Satisfaction with Council as a landlord
 - Satisfaction with the housing service and quality of service provided
 - Satisfaction with our approach to customer care
 - Satisfaction with property maintenance and repairs services
 - Satisfaction with estate management services
 - Satisfaction with properties and neighbourhoods
 - Satisfaction with the Allocations Policy
 - Satisfaction with rent levels, Housing Benefit administration and rent collection
 - Priorities for Capital Investment – linked to SHQS and Standard Delivery Plan
 - Priorities for improvements and changes to the service
 - Ease of contact with the service
 - Awareness of opportunities for involvement (tenant and service user participation)
 - Collation of data on tenant profiles and equal opportunities information

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is important that the Council can demonstrate that the surveys were carried out in an open, impartial and transparent process. Therefore, in order to assure tenants of this independence, it was considered that external expertise would be required. Following a procurement process, a specialist research company, Research Resource, undertook the survey on behalf of the Council as it was considered they presented value for money and had the relevant skills and expertise required for this type of work.

- 2.2 Initially, a sample of tenants and other service users were involved in the development of the final questionnaires. Four geographically-based focus groups were held with tenants in Bo'ness, Grangemouth, Denny and Camelon. These meetings were held in June 2007.
- 2.3 The surveys were conducted using two methods. Firstly a questionnaire was issued to measure satisfaction with all aspects of the Council's Housing Service and Allocation Policy. Secondly, focus groups and detailed interviews were held to gain qualitative information from tenants and other service users. These allowed respondents to share their views and their priorities on the Housing Service.
- 2.4 Information on satisfaction with the Housing Service was collated after carrying out 1004 face to face interviews with a sample of tenants across all the office areas in line with the overall profile of tenants.
- 2.5 Information on the Council's Allocation Policy was collated after conducting 402 interviews through a telephone survey. These survey findings have contributed to the consultation process for the ongoing Allocation Review.
- 2.6 The information gained through the questionnaires, detailed interviews and focus groups will now be used to plan and design future service improvements.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULT FINDINGS

- 3.1 An Executive Summary of the Tenants Satisfaction Survey and the Housing Waiting List Survey are attached as appendices. Copies of the full reports are available as background papers.
- 3.2 In general, the report findings are positive and encouraging with 93% of tenants stating that they are satisfied with the Council as their landlord. Very high satisfaction levels were returned from tenants regarding their neighbourhoods (96%), the quality of their environment (93%) and the design and layout of the properties (94%). These results reflect the high levels of investment that Falkirk Council has committed over the years to improving its housing stock and the quality of local environments.
- 3.3 Tenants indicated high satisfaction levels with the quality of service from all staff (e.g. helpfulness of reception staff 98%; attitude of tradesmen (97%). The survey also revealed high satisfaction levels with our communication resources (e.g. Tenancy Book 98%; newsletter 98%; website 97%).
- 3.4 Tenants also indicated high satisfaction with the financial services they receive. 98% state the service they receive when paying their rent is excellent, good or fair and 91% rated the housing benefit services excellent, good or fair.
- 3.5 The survey findings also identified areas for service improvement. Members had previously agreed to undertake an Allocation Review following a Committee Report in September 2007 which highlighted weaknesses with the current policy. The survey findings have confirmed that applicants do not fully understand the points system and generally do not perceive the Allocations Policy as fair.

- 3.6 The repairs service overall is considered to be satisfactory. However, satisfaction levels fall slightly on the length of time taken to complete repairs (78%) and the repairs follow-up service (76%). Whilst these satisfaction levels are still fairly high, BMD and Housing Services are continually striving to improve service delivery and a number of initiatives have been introduced as part of the ongoing Best Value Service Review (e.g. On the Spot Repairs and the Appointments System). These initiatives will continue to be developed and further work has been identified as part of the Best Value Service Review.
- 3.7 The survey has also highlighted the need for more publicity and awareness raising with certain aspects of the service. In particular we have identified that access to repairs reporting and the role of the Anti Social Behaviour Team need to be prioritised.

4. PUBLICATION OF THE REPORTS

- 4.1 It is intended to publish the survey report findings widely. This will be done in a number of ways, firstly the report findings will be published on the Council's website. Thereafter, there will be further publicity through the Tenants Newsletter "In the Neighbourhood", as well as reporting in Falkirk Council News and making information available in the One Stop Shops.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The survey has achieved its objectives as set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3. The Council has in-depth information on tenants' and service users' views on every aspect of the housing service. This information can now be used as a benchmark to measure future satisfaction levels and will act as a basis for planning and delivering future service improvements.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Members of Housing & Social Work Services Committee are asked to:

- 6.1 note the findings of the satisfaction survey

.....
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Date: 18 January 2008

Our ref: AAL0208

Contact Officer: Elizabeth Hood, Divisional Manager on ext. 0787

List of Appendices

1. Executive Summary – Falkirk Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2007
2. Executive Summary – Falkirk Council Waiting List Survey 2007

List of Background Papers

1. Falkirk Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey Research Report – August 2007
2. Falkirk Council Waiting List Survey Research Report – August 2007
 3. Tenant Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire 2007
 4. Waiting List Survey Questionnaire 2007
5. Housing & Social Work Services Committee Report : Tenants Satisfaction Questionnaire Report on Survey Findings – 4 March 2004